PRICE

OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY

No. 133

Price 5 cents

OLD SLEUTH'S SILENT WITNESS

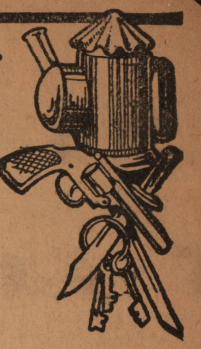
"FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, SAVE ME, SIR!" CRIED THE BEAUTIFUL VERA BRISTOL.

by "OLD SLEUTH"

THE ARTHUR WESTBROOK COMPANY CLEVELAND U. S. A.

Scanned and Donated from
the Collection of
Darren Nemeth 2026

OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY



A Series of

THE MOST THRILLING DETECTIVE STORIES EVER PUBLISHED

No. 133 | THE ARTHUR WESTBROOK COMPANY, CLEVELAND, U. S. A. Published Weekly. By Subscription, $2.50 per year; $1.25 for 6 months. | **Vol. III**

Copyright, 1911, by The Arthur Westbrook Company.

OLD SLEUTH'S SILENT WITNESS

OR

THE DEAD HAND AT THE MORGUE

By "OLD SLEUTH."

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

OLD SLEUTH—The world-famous detective, who by chance stumbles upon a most remarkable mystery.

ABNER CONRAD—A deep-dyed villain, who seeks to rob innocent women of their fortunes and who then turns them over to a terrible fate.

MARGARET BRISTOL—A beautiful and accomplished young woman, who finds a friend at a moment when she is in dire distress.

VERA BRISTOL—Her sister, a most unfortunate girl.

JUAN TAVERA—An unscrupulous Spaniard, who for a sum of money offers to deliver up a beautiful young woman to a scheming scoundrel.

TOM JENKINS—An ex-convict, who is not averse to turning an honest dollar, and who exchanges personalities with Old Sleuth the detective.

DR. JORESKY.—A cold-blooded scientist, who aids the man Conrad in his nefarious plans.

CHAPTER I.

A DULL DAY AT THE MORGUE.

The morgue was deserted—that is by the living, and there was but one dead body there. It was a dull day at the morgue, much more so than usual.

For that reason the entrance of a middle aged man dressed in the garb of a countryman, attracted the attention of the attendant who was on duty at the time. This latter was named Michael Murphy. Murphy was known as one of the grouchiest men in the employ of the city of New York. Perhaps his daily association with the dead had something to do with his morose and unsociable disposition.

Murphy's eyes were fixed on the visitor almost angrily.

"Well, old man, what do you want?"

The stranger took a few steps forward and peered inquisitively at the attendant.

"Good afternoon, friend."

"I ain't no friend of yours," snapped Murphy.

"The Lord be praised," answered the countryman, raising his hands above his head in a prayerful attitude.

"What you giving me?"

"Nothing, Mr. Grouch. Why should I give you anything? You haven't done anything for me, have you?"

"No, and I ain't going to."

"Now you are talking, old man. We'll come to an understanding yet, in spite of——"

"Spite of what?"

"You are popularly known as 'Murph, The Grouch,' ain't you?"

"See here, you git out of this!" commanded the attendant. "You know where you are?"

The stranger moved a couple of steps forward.

"I hears you has a bunch of fingers in your old house here, eh?"

"Fingers?"

"Jest so."

"I don't know what you mean."

"A hand."

"A hand?"

"Yes. Ain't that what the mornin' papers said? A human hand without the rest of what usually goes with a hand."

The light of sudden intelligence flashed into the eyes of the morgue attendant.

"Oh, huh! You mean the dead hand, we've got here?"

"Jest so."

"Well, what if we have."

"Kin I look at it?"

"You can't."

"Why not?"

"It ain't your hand, is it?"

"Mebby and mebby not. Mr. Grouch, I want to see that hand."

"I said you couldn't."

"What kind of a hand is it?"

"Just a hand, that's all."

"Woman's or man's hand?"

"A woman's. G'wan, I ain't got time to be answering fool questions."

"See here, my man, you are paid by the city to be courteous to visitors are you not?"

"Not fool visitors with fool questions to ask."

"Where do you keep the hand?"

"None of your business."

"Is it the hand of a young or old woman?"

"None of your business."

"Where was the hand found?"

"None of your business."

"Has any one been here to look at the hand?"

"None of your——"

Murphy the Grouch did not finish his sentence. Two powerful hands had grasped him about the throat. Murphy tried to cry out, but the pressure of those fingers on his windpipe made it impossible for him to do so. The stranger shook him as a terrier would a rat.

Murphy grew more and more helpless in the hands of the countryman, grew black in the face. Then the supposed farmer cast the attendant from him. Murphy landed in a heap underneath a marble slab upon which rested the body of a poor, unfortunate wretch that had been fished from the river that morning.

The visitor giving no further heed to the half unconscious man, stepped up to the slab, pulled the rubber sheet from the upper part of the body, gazing down into the distorted dead face.

"Another one weary of life," muttered the stranger replacing the covering.

By this time the morgue attendant was sitting up rubbing his throat, blinking rapidly, for his eyes were still bulging from the choking he had received.

"Where is the hand, Michael?" reiterated the visitor.

Once more the stranger had the attendant by the throat.

"Don't do it again! Don't—I'll get the cursed hand. Who be ye, man or devil?"

"Mebby I'm both. You'll find out if you don't be more civil. The next person who comes in here—the next live one, I mean—see that you treat him as you are paid for doing. Show me the hand."

Without another word the morgue attendant led the farmer to the far end of the room where wrapped in a towel, was an object that would not have been noticed had one not been looking for it.

"There's your hand," snapped Michael, shaking the thing loose from the towel, allowing it to drop heavily to the slab.

The stranger picked up the grewsome object, holding it from him, gazing at it fixedly.

No doubt the reader has ere this, recognized in the farmer, the great detective, Old Sleuth. Sleuth's curiosity had been aroused by the meagre stories in the morning papers, about the dead hand at the morgue. With his usual curiosity he had proceeded direct to the morgue to look at the hand. Instinctively with that strange intuition for which he was so noted, he felt that he should find something in the hand to interest him. So far as he knew, no lost hand had any bearing on any case that he was at that time engaged upon. But little things as he had learned, often lead to greater ones, one strange mystery dove-tailed into another in a most miraculous manner. No detail was too trivial for him to take note of it.

"Well, is it your hand?"

"It is not my hand, Michael. My hand is a little more active than this, as you should have reason to know."

The great detective wrapped the hand in the towel and laid it down gently. His face did not change its expression, *but Old Sleuth had made a most startling discovery.*

CHAPTER II.

HIS STARTLING DISCOVERY.

"Michael, how long do you think that hand has been dead?" questioned the supposed farmer.

"Not more than two days," answered the morgue attendant confidently.

"You are quite positive of this?"

"Sure as you're a foot high."

"You would be willing to stake your professional reputation on that statement?"

"I would."

"You would be willing to swear that that hand once belonged to a living person, eh?"

"Be ye crazy, stranger?"

"I am beginning to think one of us is."

"Which one?"

"The crazy one," answered Old Sleuth cuttingly, whereat the morgue attendant subsided.

"Do you know, Michael, you are the most silly old man I ever saw in my life?"

"What's that?" demanded Murphy starting up angrily.

"I'll prove that you are."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I'll do better than that, I'll let the dead hand prove it."

"You'll let the dead hand prove it?"

"Yes, I will let the dead hand prove it. If the dead hand doesn't prove it to your satisfaction I'll give you a hundred dollars as soon as I sell my next crop of potatoes."

"You will give me a hundred dollars?"

"That is what I said."

"How do I know you will keep your word?"

"I will keep my word. Even if I should not you would lose nothing."

"That's so," admitted Murphy thoughtfully. "I hadn't looked at it that way before."

"But I will prove it."

"Let's see what is it you are going to prove? It's been so long since we begun talking about it that I've forgotten what you were going to prove?"

"That you are a silly old fool."

"I ain't."

"Well, that may be so. If I don't prove it, I have promised to make you a present of a hundred dollars as soon as I sell my next crop of potatoes."

"When will that be?"

"In about six months."

Murphy uttered a loud grunt, half of anger and half of disgust.

"Git out!"

"No, Old Grouch. Do not forget that you asked me to do that once before and something strange and unusual happened. Something may happen again should you forget yourself."

"What do you want?"

"I do not want anything. I am going to prove something to you. Step back to the slab and we will begin."

"What are you going to do?"

"It is not I that is going to do something, Michael. It is you who are going to prove that you are a silly old fool."

"I'll do nothing of the sort, I'd have ye know."

"Oh, yes you will. You only think you won't. Now be good enough to unwrap the hand and hold it up."

Rather reluctantly the morgue attendant did so.

"Do you see anything peculiar about that hand, Michael?"

"Only that it's dead, and I don't know that that's what you'd call peculiar."

"You are sure it is dead?"

"See here, I don't know who you are, but you ain't going to make a monkey of me any longer. If I can't put you out of the place, I'll call them as can."

"Call them, Michael. I really feel the need of a little exercise. The last person I strangled to-day was a giant with a road circus. I——"

Murphy was getting madder and madder.

Old Sleuth removed his knife from his pocket, opened it, and drove it into the dead hand.

"Mother of Mary, what are you doing?" gasped the horrified Murphy.

"Proving my case," replied Old Sleuth coolly. He gave the knife a twist whereupon a piece of the hand dropped off. "Does this prove I am right or wrong?" demanded our hero, holding up both the piece and the hand itself.

"Be ye man or devil?"

"I am not a devil, at least if I am I don't know it, though I have been accused of being the Evil One on several occasions."

"Is that a hand?"

Murphy gazed and as he gazed his eyes grew large with wonder.

"Well?"

"Wha—what——"

"Are you a silly old fool?"

"What is it?" fairly gasped the morgue attendant.

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"The hand is nothing more than a clever imitation in wax. You have been beautifully sold."

Old Sleuth broke off another chunk, this time with his own hands, grinding the wax on the slab and then brushing it off on the floor.

The two men walked toward the office where Sleuth intended to make some inquiries. He could not make up his mind just what the meaning of what he had

found, might be. There were several people in the morgue by this time. Sleuth had been with the Superintendent some twenty minutes when he once more came out into the morgue room proper. There was no one there then save Murphy. Murphy was leaning his chin on his hand. He was thoughtful, but his face grew black as he saw the detective emerge.

"Well, how's the hand?"

"There ain't no hand."

"No hand?"

"No."

"What have you done with it?"

"Nothing, it's a dummy."

"Of course."

Our hero stepped over to the slab to take another look at the most clever imitation of a human member that he had ever seen.

"Murphy, come here," he said sharply.

The attendant strode over to where Sleuth was standing. The morgue attendant looked; a startled expression sprang to his eyes, then with a yell he bolted from the room.

CHAPTER III.

OLD SLEUTH'S STRANGE FIND.

As he uttered the words recorded at the close of our last chapter, the famous detective bent over the marble slab, peering more carefully at what he had seen there.

One glance had been enough for the morgue attendant. Murphy the Grouch had never received such a fright in all his twenty years as an attendant to the dead.

"What mystery is here?" muttered Sleuth. "Certainly my eyes nor my other senses do not deceive me for Murphy saw and understood."

Old Sleuth picked up the hand and arm, and carried it to a window, then the cause of his surprise and Murphy's fright were explained.

The hand that the famous detective was holding up was a human hand of flesh and blood. The wax imitation had utterly disappeared, leaving the real thing in its place. For once in his life, our hero was wholly mystified, he was perplexed beyond anything that had ever occurred to him before.

Sleuth lay down the arm and hastening to the adjoining room, whence Murphy had fled, he hauled that worthy from his hiding place.

"See here," demanded the detective, sternly. "What sort of a joke are you trying to play on me?"

"I—I am not playing jokes, sir."

"Yes you are."

"I am not, I tell you. Did you see it?"

"See what?"

"The hand?"

"I saw two hands."

"No, no, I mean that one there," paling ever so little as he pointed toward the marble slab.

"You mean the wax hand. Pooh! That is nothing but a joke, I tell you it is nothing more than a clever wax imitation."

"Wax!" fairly exploded Murphy.

"Yes."

"No, sir, didn't I see it with my own eyes? I tell you it's a real hand. But—but—but, it wasn't there a few minutes ago."

The detective did not answer for a minute. He was thoughtful and silent.

"Yes, it is a real hand this time, Murphy. There can be no mistake about that."

"But how, sir, how did it happen?"

"That I am not prepared to answer. Murphy, who has been in here?"

"You mean just now?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. Several people were here at the time, sir."

"I mean while I was in the room with the superintendent."

"Yes, there were five or six."

"What did they want?"

"Some of them didn't want anything. Others wanted to see the hand."

"Did you show it to them?"

"I let them go look at it."

"Men or women?"

"Both."

"Describe them?"

"Well, there was a fellow who looked as if he might run a beer saloon."

"Yes?"

"And an old party, just come in for curiosity's sake, and a young woman, a peach I tell ye."

"A peach?"

"Yes, sir."

"Describe her."

"She had red hair, sir, and wore a peach basket on her head."

A grim smile spread over the countenance of the famous detective.

"I understand. I agree with you. Well, who else?"

"An old woman."

"Oh, an old woman, eh?" demanded the detective pricking up his ears.

"Yes, sir."

"What sort of a looking woman was she?"

"I couldn't say, sir, she had her veil down."

"Ah!" The exclamation escaped Sleuth like the pop of a pistol. "Was she tall or short, stout or thin?"

Murphy stroked his chin reflectively.

"Come to think of it, sir, I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"No, sir."

"Certainly you must know whether she was as tall as I am or——"

"No, she wasn't quite as tall. But I remember now, I did think she was tall for a woman."

"How was she dressed?"

"Black dress, old dress. I reckon she come out of the tenement districts."

"Very likely. Did she remain long?"

"No, sir."

"Tell me exactly what she did while she was here?"

"Well, let me see. Yes, I remember, she wanted to know where the arm was——"

"What did her voice sound like?" interrupted the detective.

"Sounded like a woman's."

"Very well proceed."

"The woman walked over to where the arm was. I was busy at the minute answering some questions of another party."

"How long were you thus engaged?"

"'Bout a minute, I guess."

"And then?"

"Well, when I turned around I saw the old party heading for the door."

"Did she look around?"

"No, sir."

"Did she have anything in her hand?"

"No, sir, that is, sir, I don't know."

"Well, what do you mean by those contradictory statements?"

"She had her hands under her cloak."

"Ah, I see."

"What do you see?"

"She wore a cloak, even though the weather is summer and very hot, is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not see her again?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, I want you to keep your eyes open, Murphy. Watch carefully every person who comes here to see that hand. Write down a description of them for me. I will see you later."

"You are a detective, hain't you?"

"Maybe I am and maybe I am not."

"What you going to do now?"

"I am going to find the old woman, Murphy. There is something here that needs looking into. Say nothing about my having been here under any circumstances."

"I won't sir."

The famous detective left the morgue abruptly. He had thus unexpectedly come upon one of the strangest cases that it had ever been his lot to become interested in.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CALL OF THE TRAIL.

Old Sleuth loved a mystery. There was nothing beneath the skies that appealed to him more strongly. He cared little for money, for our hero possessed a plenty of this world's goods. He was a detective for the pure love of the profession, the only kind of a detective who ever makes a great success in the world in this line of work.

After leaving the morgue, our hero started downtown on a Fourth Avenue car. He had no particular motive in doing so, but he had no more than seated himself in the car than a gentleman rose from the opposite side and came over by him.

"Hello, Loveland," greeted the other.

"Oh, how are you chief. Do you want me?"

"I do. I do not know of another man whom I would rather see at this particular moment. I was going to have one of my men look you up," said the chief of police with a good-natured laugh.

"All at sea again, I presume," smiled Sleuth.

"All at sea," answered the police official. "Were you going anywhere in particular?"

"Nowhere in particular, everywhere in general," answered the detective enigmatically. "But what was it you wished to see me about?"

"I would rather not talk about it here, Henry, it's too public."

The detective nodded his understanding.

"I will get off with you here, if you wish."

"Supposing we go on down to headquarters. We shall be reasonably sure of not being overheard there. What do you say?"

"I am willing."

For the rest of the journey downtown the two men discussed other things. The Chief and Old Sleuth were friends of many years' standing, and no man knew better the value of the advice or assistance of the greatest of all modern detectives, Old Sleuth. He had consulted our hero on many difficult problems and many of the chief's greatest successes had been won by following the advice of the detective.

Reaching the new headquarters building the men alighted, the chief going to his office by way of a private entrance.

"Now chief, let's get to business. You wanted to see me?"

"I did, and I do."

"Very well, I am listening."

"It is about this hand at the morgue that I wished to consult you!"

The detective smiled.

"I thought so," he nodded.

"You know of the case?"

"I read something of it in the papers today," answered Sleuth evasively.

"What do you think of it?"

"Supposing you tell me something about it before I express an opinion. First hand information is better than second hand."

"That's just the trouble, we have no first hand information. All we know about it is what the papers have stated."

"You surely are investigating?"

"Oh, yes, we are trying to. But I must confess we have made absolutely no headway thus far."

"You are having the hand watched, are you not?"

"No, why?"

"That detective bureau of yours needs a real live man at the head of it, chief."

"What makes you say that?"

"Because I know it to be true. How do you know that you are not losing valuable clews, real clews there at the morgue."

"You may be right at that."

"I know I am right. But go on."

"Well, there is one thing certain, the hand has been severed from the body to which it belonged, by a very sharp knife. That is, I am so informed."

"In that you are right. A most remarkable conclusion," added the detective with an ironical smile.

"You seem to know a great deal about it, Henry."

Sleuth shrugged his shoulders.

"Proceed," he said.

"It is believed that the hand had been thrown into the river and that perhaps the body is there now."

Old Sleuth nodded thoughtfully. The same thought had occurred to him, but he was not yet prepared to decide upon it as an established fact.

"You have no suspicions as to the station in life of the woman, have you?"

"Of course not, how could we?"

"That should be easy to determine."

"How?"

"By examining the hand."

"I do not see how that is going to help us any. It is a pretty hand——"

"*Even if it was wax*," interrupted the detective.

"What!"

"The hand first brought to the morgue, was nothing more nor less than a wax imitation of a human hand. Your men have been beautifully sold," said our hero quietly.

"You don't mean that, Loveland?"

"That is exactly what I do mean."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the chief. "How do you know this?"

"Because I saw it."

"You saw it?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"This morning."

"I—I can't believe it," muttered the police official, his dazed eyes fixed on the face of his visitor. "And you say you have seen the hand with your own eyes?"

"I have."

"And it is wax?"

"It *was* wax." A peculiar smile curled the lips of the detective. "I am sorry you were so taken in."

"Well, if you speak true, we certainly have been taken in. I'll have the hand brought here and decide very quickly whether you are right, whether the hand at the morgue is an artificial one or not."

"I did not say it *is*," corrected the detective.

"Are you going daffy?"

"No, I am not. I said *was*, not is. The hand at the morgue is a human hand, chief, and a very beautiful one at that."

The police official settled back in his chair helplessly.

CHAPTER V.

A POLICEMAN DUMBFOUNDED.

"Am I going crazy or are you Henry? Which is it?"

Old Sleuth laughed softly.

"I hope neither of us will come to such an undesirable finish as that, I hope not indeed."

"Will you please explain to me what you mean by your very peculiar remarks of a few minutes ago?"

"Yes."

Our hero then related briefly the facts concerning the hand which when he first saw it, was found to be wax and which a few moments later had turned into human flesh and bone. Sleuth did not go into details regarding what further observations or discoveries he had made, at least he volunteered no information on these points.

"So you really did go to the morgue this morning?"

"Yes."

"And all the time you were laughing at me in your sleeve, knowing more about this case than I even dreamed?"

"Oh, I do not know about that."

"Well, I do," answered the chief rather sharply.

"Thank you."

"Did you discover anything else?"

"Oh yes, of course. I managed to pick up a few odds and ends of one sort or another. You would not expect me to be asleep would you?"

"Not you," muttered the police official. "Nobody ever did that yet, though some people have been foolish enough to think they might catch you asleep. Well, may I ask what your conclusions, are, Henry?"

"I don't know as I care to state them just at present. I am not officially on this case, you know."

"Yes, you are!" ejaculated the chief, thumping the

desk with a heavy fist. "And from appearances, you are the only one who *is* on it. The hands were changed while you were in the place——"

"Not while I was in the place, chief. I should have seen it done if that had been the case. I was in the superintendent's office at the time the exchange was made."

"You have no idea, of course who did it?"

"Yes, I have."

"What!"

The simple statement, delivered in a calm even voice which Old Sleuth nearly always used, stirred the police head to sudden activity. His amazement was too great for him to find words to express himself.

"You—you know——"

"Of course I do not know who the person was. I merely know the circumstances."

"Will you relate them to me?"

"For your own information, yes. A woman, an old, poorly dressed woman entered the morgue while the attention of the attendant was directed elsewhere. She made the exchange, carrying the artificial arm away with her, secreted under her cloak. It was all very simple, almost childishly so."

"And all this happened right under the eyes of the morgue attendant?"

"Yes."

"And he never saw it at all?"

"He did not."

"He must be a lunkhead."

"He was engaged in a very interesting conversation at that moment."

"With whom?"

"Oh, with a man."

"Who was the man?"

"The confederate of the old woman," answered our hero with a smile.

Once more the chief started up with a sudden exclamation.

"You've got my head in a whirl. I'm spinning like a merry-go-round at Coney Island."

"But without the music," interjected the detective, laughingly.

"You—you are going to go through this case for me, aren't you Henry?' demanded the chief, anxiously.

"I'll think it over. I guess I shall have to if the mystery is ever to be solved."

"I thought you would. When will you begin?'

"It strikes me," ejaculated Sleuth, "that I already have begun."

Our hero after some further conversation with the chief of police, took his departure. Having some other matters to attend to, he gave no further attention to the curious incident that had befallen him that morning. As a matter of fact the matter did not occur to him sharply, during the rest of the afternoon. When it did, Sleuth boarded an uptown car and hurried over to the morgue again. It was near closing time when he got there, but first he had sent an urgent message to the chief of police, who in turn had communicated with the morgue.

"Hello, you here again?" demanded Murphy as he saw our hero entering the grewsome place again.

"Yes, I'm the bad penny. I always turn up, heads I win, tails you lose, you know."

"Piffle," sniffed Murphy.

"As you will. How's the hand, Murphy?"

"It ain't been doing nothing much this afternoon," grinned the attendant.

"Any one been here to look at it?"

"Lots of 'em."

"Did you do as I told you too, about writing down descriptions of your callers?"

"Yes, but I don't know why I went to all that bother."

"I do."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I told you to."

"Humph!"

"Let me have it."

Sleuth stuffed the paper in his pocket without looking at it.

"Thank you," he said, nonchalantly. "I'll take the hand now if you will be good enough to do it up for me."

"You'll take what?"

"The hand."

Murphy gazed at him in amazed surprise, then his face flushed angrily.

"What do you take me for?"

"Just an ordinary morgue attendant with more or less common sense, according to the way one looks at your peculiarities. Come, do up the hand."

"I'll not."

"Oh, yes, you will."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because in the first place, it is the orders of the chief and in the second because I'll wring your neck right now if you don't."

Murphy uttered a growl and started for the hand.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT THE DEAD PALM SAID.

With his grewsome burden Old Sleuth boarded a car and started for home. Had those sitting near him in the public conveyance had any idea that they were rubbing elbows with a dead elbow they might have

made some objection. But so long as they did not know, there was nothing to be alarmed about.

The moment Sleuth entered the door of his home, his quick instinct told him that there was a stranger in the house.

"Ah, chief, it is you!" exclaimed the detective as his eye fell upon the familiar figure of the police head.

"Yes."

"I expected you."

"You expected me?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"I knew that you would be here, and I am glad that it is so for I have something interesting to show you."

"Something connected with the case, you mean?"

"Very closely connected with it," smiled Sleuth.

Very deliberately he laid aside his coat and hat and seating himself before a desk proceeded to unroll the bundle that he had carried from the morgue. A moment more and the white hand lay pale and ghostly in the bright electric light of the detective's library.

The chief was used to such scenes, but even he showed a grave face as he gazed down upon the thing that had once been so full of life and activity. Both men were looking in the same direction, but neither spoke for some time.

"Tom, mark well what I am going to say, what I am going to do, for perhaps some time in the near future you may have reason to remember this evening."

"What do you mean, Sleuth?"

"That, you will learn in due time."

Our hero took from the drawer of his desk a powerful magnifying glass which he held over the hand, first over the palms and then over the back of the hand. Especially critical was he of the finger nails of the dead hand, which he gave even more attention than he did the rest of the hand. The detective's face gave no indication that he had made any special discovery.

"Well, I am waiting," said the chief in a low tone.

"And I will satisfy your curiosity." Sleuth paused briefly, then began again.

"This is the hand of a young woman," he said, examining the hand thoughtfully. "The woman was not more than twenty-six years of age. She was refined, well educated and of good family. I should say, however, that she had been forced at a not very remote date, to seek service to earn her living. Evidently her family or herself had suffered reverses that came suddenly."

The chief was gazing in open-mouthed wonder.

"Do—do you mean to tell me you are reading all that in that woman's palm?"

"I am telling you what I see only."

The chief had never known this side of the character of the great detective, and for that reason he marveled the more. The head of the police force had many times been the means of rooting out the so-called fake palmists, and he never had believed that the time would come when he should sit down and take the deepest sort of an interest in the reading of a palm. Had any one told him that he would do so, he would have laughed them in the face. He had never been more deeply interested than at the present moment.

"What else do you find?"

"Do you know there is something strange about this hand?"

"Yes."

"This hand once sought to commit a murder."

"A murder?"

"Yes."

"You astound me! Impossible!"

"I am inclined to think the blow was struck in self-defence. The woman was a pronounced blonde with blonde hair and light blue eyes. She was about five feet tall, elegantly proportioned and of a sweet, sunny temperament unless unduly aggravated when she might have shown a directly opposite side to her character."

"But what has all this to do with the hand?"

"It all plays a part in the general scheme that I will unfold to you," said Sleuth in his low, musical voice. "She has been incarcerated against her will, which is evidenced by these ridges on the palm where she has grasped what I should say were iron bars in an effort to tear the fetters from her prison room. She must have suffered terribly."

"Heavens," muttered the chief.

"There is more to tell. The end is not yet. Tragedy is written in every line of the hand. The cross on the Mount of Jupiter promises a sudden and terrible death, and from all indications she met exactly that. Tom, a terrible crime has been committed if the handwriting in the lines of this dead hand are to be relied upon."

"You think so?"

"Yes, the suit case mystery, the headless body floating in the East River are trivial affairs compared with this. You will see that I am right, that I have only hinted at the truth."

"Then what is the truth?"

"Ah, my friend, that I can only surmise, but were I to tell you what is in my mind I believe I could almost picture the scene that led to the severing of this member."

"Wonderful."

"No, it is not wonderful, it is simple."

"You can read the story like a book."

"No, like a primer, the primer of my boyhood."

"This is the most amazing thing I have seen in all my experience, Sleuth."

"There are many amazing things in your daily life if only you will pause long enough to look for them. You will find them. You of all men should look deeply into things as they are. And now having read you this

little lecture we will get down to the facts that you are most interested in."

"I am interested in every word you have uttered. But you have no idea who could have committed this crime, have you?"

Sleuth thought for a moment.

"Perhaps not by name. I will say, however, that the man who severed this arm, was about six feet tall. He was thin and gaunt. He has a deformed nail on the finger of his right hand, and his hair is fiery red."

"Good heavens, man!" ejaculated the chief.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAIL OPENS UP.

Sleuth was a man who, when once he made up his mind to do a certain thing, never lessened his efforts until he had accomplished what he had set out to do. Long after the chief had left him, the famous detective sat gazing at that lifeless thing before him.

"How did I know? the chief wanted to know—how did I know that the man's hair was red? Why, it is as simple as twice two, for are not the murderers red hairs there beneath the nails of the hand before me. And are not her own there too where she tore them from her own head in her last agony of despair? How does Sleuth know? He knows because he uses his eyes as well as the other four senses that his Creator has blessed him with. My dear, this crime shall be avenged, a terrible punishment shall be meted out to the man who has done this thing. I promise you, poor dead hand that justice shall prevail, and a terrible justice it shall be."

As he delivered the last words, the detective rose to his full height. There was an expression on his handsome face such as men had never looked upon without quailing. It was the face of the master as well as the avenger, and Old Sleuth was a master in all that the word implies.

The detective carefully wrapped the hand in the cloth that he had brought with it, then placed it where it would come to no harm until he should restore it to the dead house on the following morning.

This done, our hero glanced at his watch, left some directions with his servant and left the house.

The evening was still young and many people were upon the street. He had not proceeded far before he realized that some one had fallen to his trail, and it did not take him long to discover that this some one was a woman.

"That's strange," muttered the detective. "Why should a woman be put upon my trail. Unless I am mistaken, it is a young woman. I will double on her and face her."

All at once the detective disappeared from the sight of the woman who was following him. She stood dazed gazing in all directions. She could not understand the meaning of the mysterious disappearance that had occurred before her very eyes.

"What can it mean. And I wanted to see him so much. I have lost him, I have lost my chance. I have——"

"What is it you have lost, madame?" inquired a pleasant, deep-toned voice.

The young woman sprang back with a little cry. A stranger stood before her, a much older man than the one whom she had been following since he left his home.

"Sir, what do you mean?"

"I thought I heard you say you had lost something."

"That is no concern of yours."

"It is because I know what it is you have lost."

"You know what I have lost?"

"I do, my dear young lady."

"What have I lost?"

"The man you were following."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and you are wondering how it happened. No, do not deny it."

"How—how do you know?"

"You have just told me."

"I told you?"

"Yes, madame."

"How did I tell you?"

"When you said 'how do you know.' The man laughed easily. "Tell me what it is—why it is that you are so cast down over your loss?"

"Why should I speak to you, a stranger."

"Because I may be able to help you."

"How can you help me?"

"In ways that you little dream of. I have resources not possessed by the ordinary man."

"Who are you?"

"Just a plain, ordinary old fellow who has a lot of time on his hands which he loves to devote to those who are in trouble."

"Who is in trouble?"

"You are."

"How do you know?"

"By the same token as before. It does not need one gifted with second sight to see that."

For a full minute the young woman, who was heavily veiled with a grey automobile veil studied the face of the man before her. She could not make out his features very clearly in the uncertain light, for the nearest street lamp was nearly half a block from them.

"Do you know the man whom you say I have lost?"

"I may have heard of him," was the evasive answer.

"What is the man's business?"

"He is sometimes called a detective, but perhaps he

isn't much of a detective after all. He may be very much overrated."

"No, sir, he is not, if all that I hear is true."

"Well, I certainly have one sincere admirer," thought Old Sleuth, whom the reader has recognized ere this. Sleuth had done exactly what he promised himself he would do. He had doubled on the girl, worked a quick change in his disguise and approached near enough to hear the young woman's expression of disappointment when she realized that she had been too late. For reasons best known to himself he had not seen fit to reveal himself at once.

"What all do you hear, may I ask?"

"Why should I continue to stand here conversing with you? I do not know you, sir."

"We are both at a disadvantage there," laughed the detective. "As I said before, I may be able to be of assistance to you. What have you heard?"

"That he is one of the most clever detectives in America, and what is more that he is noble and good."

"Why were you following him?"

The girl hesitated.

"I wished to see him. I wished to look at the face of the man I had heard so much of, to see him in the flesh. You may think me silly if you will. I cannot help that, nor do I care."

"My dear young lady, that was not why you were following the party you lost."

"It was not?"

"No."

"What was my object?"

"You had a strange story to unfold to him, that was why."

"Who are you?" demanded the woman sharply, starting back in amazement.

"*I am Old Sleuth, the man you were looking for, the man you were following and the man you lost a few minutes ago.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGARET FINDS A FRIEND.

For several minutes after the announcement recorded at the close of our last chapter, the young woman was silent. The detective stood waiting for her to regain her composure.

"You are Old Sleuth?"

"Yes."

"The great detective of that name?"

"I am a detective."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes."

"But you are not the man—not the same man whom I was following?"

"Oh yes, I am."

"No, this is some sort of a trick you are playing on me. I must not listen to you."

"If you feel that way of course there is nothing more to be said," announced the detective turning away. He had gone but a few steps when he was halted by a cry from the girl.

"Please, please do not go."

"You have reconsidered?"

"I—I don't know. If only I were sure."

"Sure of what?"

"That you are what you claim to be."

"I can prove my identity to you."

"You can?"

"Certainly, I can."

"How."

"By assisting you in your trouble."

"Am I in trouble?"

"You are."

"What trouble am I in?"

"You are beset by enemies; you have lost a very dear friend."

The young woman regarded him in amazement.

"How do you happen to know all of this?"

"Perhaps I am a mind reader. At least you have admitted that I am right. You wish to confide in me. Will you do so?"

"I shall have to think first."

"Come, we must not stand here. We are attracting attention. Come with me and we will go where we can talk uninterrupted."

"Where would you go?"

Sleuth mentioned the name of a well known and fashionable restaurant.

"We will go there and have supper, then you can tell me your story. We shall not be disturbed. You trust me, do you not?"

"I—I don't know, sir. I am trying not to, but somehow I cannot help trusting you. There is something about you that draws me to you in spite of myself."

"That something is in yourself, not in me," answered our hero with a laugh. "I am just an ordinary man, perhaps a little wiser than many of my fellows, but that is all. Will you come?"

"Come over here under the light."

The detective stepped along beside the girl until they were directly under a street lamp, where the girl turned and gazed up into his face for a full minute. It was an honest face, a face full of human kindness and sympathy that she looked at, but it was the wondrous eyes that seemed to hold a strange fascination for the young woman. After gazing into those eyes for a time, she let fall her own glances and took a long, deep breath. There was an audible catch in it which was not lost on her companion.

"Well, my dear young lady, are you satisfied?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"If you are not, then I will leave you——"

"Oh, no, no," exclaimed the girl suddenly. "I will trust you, I will try to trust you. You must not blame me for being suspicious. You are an utter stranger to me."

"I do not blame you. Shall we proceed now?"

"To the restaurant you spoke of?"

"Yes."

"I will go there with you."

The couple started away, and as they moved off Old Sleuth noted that the young woman's carriage was unusually graceful. As he put it to himself, "she walks like a queen. This is strange. I do not know why I should thus interest myself in a stranger in whom I have no interest. I should say in whom I had no interest, for I have a keen interest in the woman now in spite of myself."

Thus musing, each lost in their own meditations, they proceeded on and in due time reached the restaurant, a well known Broadway eating place. The large room was already fairly well filled, as the theaters were just beginning to discharge their audiences. Sleuth sought out a table that was not in close proximity to the others. It too had the advantage of being partially masked by a number of tall, potted plants.

The girl gazed about her almost apprehensively as they entered. The movement was not lost on the detective.

"She fears to meet some one," was his mental conclusion, but he made no audible comment. "We will sit over yonder," he said, making a sign to the head waiter. A glance of keen understanding shot into the eyes of the head waiter. In that sign he had recognized his customer, for Old Sleuth was well known to the waiter. He had served the great detective on many occasions and under many disguises. The couple were led to the table, where our hero quickly ordered a substantial meal, for he had not yet had his own dinner.

"Now we will talk," he said after the waiter had left them.

"Yes, we will talk."

"May I ask your name?"

"My name is Margaret Bristol," replied the young woman after a slight hesitation. "Will you tell me what happened this evening? You see I wish to be sure that you are the man I think you."

"Certainly."

Old Sleuth related his having left his home and told her how she had followed him and of his eventual quick change and the doubling on his tracks until he stood beside her a changed man.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked.

"Yes, I am satisfied," answered the girl drawing a deep sigh.

"Why were you following me?"

"I wanted to speak with you. Do you know I had stood before your house for an hour before you came out, unable to muster my courage sufficiently to permit me to ring your bell and seek an audience with you."

"Yes?"

"I saw another man come out, but he was the chief of police. I knew him because he had been pointed out to me on several occasions. Then you came out and I knew it was you."

"Very well. Now proceed with your narrative."

"Old Sleuth, for that is the only name I know you by, I have a strange and startling story to relate to you."

"Proceed," said the great detective.

CHAPTER IX.

BESET BY UNSEEN ENEMIES.

"I am a very unhappy woman," began Miss Bristol.

"That is evident. I observed that you were the moment you began following me."

The girl gazed at him wonderingly.

"You are a strange man."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"But your story is stranger."

"I think so."

"Will you let me see your face?"

Margaret hesitated, toyed with a spoon on the table before her, then raised her head ever so little.

"Why do you wish to see my face?"

"I must know who I am talking to. I judge you wish me to perform a service for you?"

"I do. Yes, yes, it is your right. You shall see my face."

With that Miss Bristol after a quick, apprehensive look about the room, threw up her veil, shading her face so that no others in the place could get a clear view of it. Old Sleuth could scarcely suppress an exclamation of surprise. The face before him was one of the most wondrously beautiful ones he had ever gazed upon. The girl's complexion was a dark olive, her eyes, dark brown and soulful, were large, veiled by long dark eyelashes, that fluttered and drooped and raised in a most fascinating manner.

"You are very beautiful," murmured the detective.

"Please do not say that. Beauty is a curse. With it no woman can succeed in an honorable way. As I have said, it is a curse."

"I understand." Well did the old detective know this. No need for the beautiful woman before him to tell him this, for had he not seen it time and time again in his eventful career.

"What business have you been in?"

"I have been working in an office down in the financial district."

"A broker's office?"

"No, a lawyer's. Not having a profession it was all that I could get to do. The pay was small, but it was better than walking the streets."

"You have not been in New York long?"

"No, something like three months. I came here from England."

"But you are not English?"

"No, I am Russian, but I was educated in England and lived there for many years with my family. My parents died, leaving my sister and myself without resources."

"But you were not always poor?"

"No, we were wealthy. Evil speculations swept father's fortune away. He had not been quite himself for a year and his money went in speculation. Before he died he tried to tell me of some investments that he had in this country that he assured me were sufficient to keep myself and my sister from want for the rest of our lives. This he said he had faithfully left untouched, even while suffering from want or from the luxuries that he had been accustomed to for so many years, all during these later days, that we might have a fortune when he was gone."

"What was the nature of this fortune?"

"Real estate and buildings, I believe."

"You know the nature of the property?"

"Not beyond what I have told you. While my father was relating the story to me, he was attacked by sudden heart failure, from which he never rallied. It was very sudden," added the young woman after pressing a handkerchief to her eyes. "We did not know that he was in any immediate danger. He was dead even while he was talking, it seemed. That is a strange statement to make, but you will understand what I mean."

"I understand. Proceed."

"We had about fifty pounds between us after paying the funeral expenses. Father had said that in the event of his death we were to go to New York at once and lay claim to the property, but he advised us never to trust to speculation, but to leave the property as it was if it should prove that we could get any income from it. Father was a very peculiar man and a very secretive one at all times."

"Did he tell you who you were to see when you reached here?"

"No, but we found among his papers a letter from a New York lawyer, stating that he had received father's letter and would give it his attention at an early day. We thought perhaps this man might have some knowledge of the estate here."

"Had he?"

"No. We came to America, my sister Vera and myself. It was with some difficulty that we found the man. When we did, it was only to meet with disappointment. He knew nothing of father's affairs and had never heard of him until he had received a letter, some friend having recommended the lawyer to father to look into some business for him."

"What was the name of the lawyer?" interrupted Old Sleuth.

"Abner Conrad."

"Proceed."

"Our money soon became exhausted and we were forced to get work for a living. My sister procured a position in a lawyer's office while I found employment in another. I have been there ever since, earning a precarious living, spending all my leisure time in a search for the property. I, at times lose hope and almost believe there is no property, that it is all an idle dream."

Sleuth nodded thoughtfully.

"Have you been to see the lawyer Conrad since?"

"No, sir. That is, I have not seen him. I did call at his office, but he had moved and I have been unable to find him."

"Hm-m-m. That is peculiar, peculiar that he should have left no address. Is he not in the directory?"

"No, sir. I think not. It seems he is a well-to-do man and he told me when I saw him that he was about to retire from business."

"Exactly," answered the detective, dryly. "But what of your sister?"

"She has disappeared."

"Disappeared?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"About ten days ago. She went to work one morning and I have neither seen nor heard from her since."

"Was there any love affair, any affair of the heart?"

"No, no, nothing of the sort. She was heart free."

"Had she appeared any different from her ordinary self previous to her disappearance?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any theory, any suspicion?"

"I fear that something terrible has happened to Vera," answered the young woman in a tremulous tone after a moment's pause.

CHAPTER X.

A DETECTIVE'S GRAVE SUSPICION.

Old Sleuth ate in silence for a few minutes after Miss Bristol's statement as recorded at the end of the preceding chapter. He was turning her story over in his mind. It was similar and yet, strangely different from the tales he had been wont to listen to during his experience as a detective.

"What time did she leave the office on the day she disappeared?"

"She did not go to the office."

"She did not?"

"No. I called up the lawyer for whom she worked when Vera failed to return home that night and he informed me that she had not been there. He appeared to be very angry and said he would have no further use for her."

"Has the disappearance been reported to the police?"

"Yes, sir."

"But they have done nothing, of course?"

"Nothing so far as I am aware. At least they have not learned anything. I possessed my soul in patience as much as I could, then I determined to go and see you. But when I got to your house I could not muster the courage to enter, as I already have told you. I don't know what I feared, but I was afraid."

"Have you reason to be afraid of any one—has anything occurred to excite your fears?"

Margaret was silent for a considerable space.

"Why do you not answer?"

"Yes, I have."

"Tell me about it?"

"I don't know how to say it without your thinking me a foolish girl."

"Proceed."

"One day on leaving my office I was accosted by a man in the hallway. He sought to gain my acquaintance. I paid no attention to him. The next day he was on hand again. I was obliged to stop for a moment because he would not let me pass."

"What did he want?" demanded Old Sleuth, almost gruffly.

"He—he said he loved me."

Sleuth could see the girl's face flush deeply through her veil. She was very much agitated.

"When I managed to get by him and into the street, I found him at my side. I threatened to call a policeman. When he saw that I was in earnest he slipped away and disappeared in the crowd."

"Had you ever seen him before—that is before he first accosted you?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Did he tell you his name?"

"Yes, but I did not understand it. The name was a foreign one."

"What sort of a looking man was he?"

"Either a Spaniard or a Mexican or something of the sort. I did not ask him any questions. All I wanted was to be rid of him."

"Was this after or before the disappearance of your sister?"

"After."

"How long?"

"A few days."

"Have you seen him since the time you threatened to call a policeman?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where and under what circumstances?"

"He followed me home from work one night."

"He did?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you aware that he was following you?"

"Not until I had reached the doorstep of my boarding place. As I did so the man stepped up beside me and laid a hand on my arm. I was about to scream when he said:

"'Do not cry out, Senorita. I love you madly. You shall be mine. The men of my race when they love, do so with a terrible jealousy. Nothing can come between them and the woman they love. Should anything come that way we kill.'"

Margaret paused and a little shudder ran over her slender figure.

"I started to tear myself away from him, whereupon he threw both arms about me and kissed me. It was terrible."

Old Sleuth squirmed uneasily and something like a growl of indignation escaped him, but he checked himself instantly.

"What happened then?" he questioned in his calm, even tone.

"I uttered a piercing shriek. The man let go of me instantly. I think I must have surprised him so that it threw him off his guard. He was standing with his back to the street on the top step of the stoop. I was facing him. All at once a terrible rage and indignation overcame me. With a sudden passion, I threw myself against him, striking the fellow in the face with both my fists. I am strong and athletic."

"Yes, so I perceive."

"The Spaniard taken off his guard, lost his balance and fell backward all the way down the steps. I heard his head strike the pavement, but I did not wait to see what more had happened. I ran into the house, locking the door behind me. I fled upstairs, but a terrible longing to see the result of my deed, overcame me. Hastening downstairs, I peered out through the parlor window. He was lying where he had fallen. You cannot imagine the awful feeling that came over me. I saw myself as a murderess, I saw myself being arrested and taken to prison. Oh, it was terrible."

"Yes, I understand. But what of the man?" breathed the detective.

"About that time some people helped him up, some people who had come along just then and saw the man lying there. There was blood on his head. They asked him what the matter was. I heard him say that he had slipped and fallen."

"What happened then?"

"He leaned against the stoop for a few minutes, then walked slowly away after first having taken careful

note of the house. He came up the steps and looked at the number. The next morning I changed my boarding place."

"Have you seen him since that time?"

"No, sir. I was so upset that I asked leave to remain away from the office for a few days. As it happened my employer was going to Chicago on a lawsuit and he readily granted my request. I have devoted my time to walking the streets hoping to catch a glimpse of my sister, hoping for I knew not what and fearing more."

Margaret had become so wrought up in the telling of her story that she had raised her veil and draped it over her hat. Her face was glowing and her eyes flashing. The picture was one that Old Sleuth long remembered.

"Do you think he is still on your track?"

"He may be, but I am satisfied he has not found me yet. I have worn a veil that he might not recognize me on the street. I never remove it until I feel that I am safe."

The girl paused. Sleuth saw her face go ashen pale.

"Oh, God look!" she moaned in an agony of despair.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

"What—what is it?" demanded the detective sharply.

"The man! The man!"

"What man?"

"The Spaniard."

"Where is he?"

"There, there at the window! Look!" Margaret settled back in a half swoon. Fortunately she had spoken so low that no one about them had overheard, or if they had, they had not noticed. Ere the words were out of her mouth, Old Sleuth was on his feet and out through a side door, he having slipped along behind a row of potted plants. His hurried departure was unnoticed so far as could be observed.

Reaching the street, he made a quick change in his appearance and began strolling about hoping to catch a look at the man who had so startled Miss Bristol. The detective reasoned that the fellow would return after a little. He waited fully ten minutes, then decided to return to the young woman whom he had left without a word. He feared that she might have collapsed utterly. Restoring his appearance to its former condition, Sleuth re-entered the restaurant and made his way to their table. Miss Bristol sat far back in her chair. Her veil was now over her face again, where she had dropped it before finishing her dinner.

"Did—did you go to look for him?"

"Yes."

"But you did not find him?"

"No."

"Oh, you must be careful."

"I must be careful?" questioned the detective.

"Yes."

"Of what?"

"He is a desperate man. He will kill you."

"He will not kill me. Have no fear for me, my dear young lady. And now let me say a few words. I have become deeply interested in your case, I feel strangely drawn to you and I want you to place implicit confidence in me, for I am going to sift this matter to the bottom. If you have property that belongs to you and that is being wrongfully withheld from you, I will restore it to you; if you have enemies who are plotting your downfall, they shall be punished, yes, they shall be brought to justice and if aught has happened to your sister, she shall be avenged."

"Oh, thank you. I am a fortunate girl, indeed, to have so true a friend as you. I never dreamed that it could be so. But, sir, how shall I be able to repay you? No, I cannot accept your service for I never shall be able to properly recompense you."

"We will leave that out of the question for the present. If, as I suspect, you are an heiress, you will be amply able to recompense me when I have placed you in possession of your fortune. If not, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have helped a worthy young woman in her hour of distress."

"You do not know that I am worthy. You——"

"I beg your pardon, I know full well. I have measured you well, and I have decided. Say no more about this feature of the matter at all. Let us talk of yourself and your sister, as well as to make some plans. Did you inquire at your sister's place of employment to find out whether she had received any letters there?"

"I did, but her employer would give me no information."

"He will talk to me, willing or not. Trust all to me. I would suggest now that you have relieved your mind, that you keep well within doors. Do not go out any more than you have to. Continue to go veiled and try to disguise your figure as much as possible. Your enemy, as we will call him, now knows that you wear a veil. Change it, wear a veil of a different color tomorrow, if you have another."

"Yes, I have."

"That is well. By the way, what is the color of Mr. Conrad's hair?"

"It is black," answered the girl, wonderingly.

"He is not a tall man?"

"No, short and thin."

Sleuth's suspicions apparently had gone wide of the mark. He had rather hoped she would say that Mr. Conrad had red hair and that he was tall and thin. Instead, quite the opposite was the case.

"I will accompany you home."

"It will not be necessary."

"It is quite necessary. I can see further than you are able to with your limited experience, my dear young lady. You must follow my instructions and trust to my longer experience to guide you."

"Very well, sir, I am wholly in your hands."

"That's right."

Sleuth called a waiter, paid his bill and the two left the restaurant. As they passed out, the detective cast a sweeping glance over the people in the street, but he was able to see no one who looked as if he might be a Spaniard.

Sleuth was laboring under a disadvantage. He had never seen the man for whom he was on the lookout. Had he, he would have been able to recognize the fellow under any disguise. Now he could merely guess at the man's identity were he to set eyes on him.

"Do you see him?" she asked as they stepped into the street.

"No, do you?"

"I do not, sir, but I fear."

"Fear nothing. You are safe with me. I only wish we might set eyes on your enemy. I would teach him a lesson that he would not soon forget."

As the detective spoke there was one on the opposite side of the street who was strolling leisurely along, keeping just a little behind Old Sleuth and his fair companion. He did not look like a Spaniard, however, he appeared like a laborer, but he kept his eyes steadily on the couple on the opposite side of the street from him.

"In case you discover that your enemy has found you, communicate with me at once by telephone and I will attend to him but do not let him know that you suspect his presence if you can possibly avoid that."

"I will do as you say, sir."

"I am sure of that. Where do we turn off?"

"At the next corner. I——"

"Perhaps it will be as well for me to leave you at the corner. I shall in that way be better able to determine whether we have been followed or not. However, before I leave you there is a question I wish to ask, a personal question to which I hope you will take no offense."

"Certainly I shall not, sir."

"Had your sister any birthmarks by which she could be identified, any facial blemish or anything of that sort?"

"No, sir, not that I can recall. The only thing of the sort is a mole almost diamond shaped——"

"Diamond shaped—where?"

"On the back of her right hand, sir, why?"

Old Sleuth started violently. *The dead hand in his room possessed an exactly similar mark.*

CHAPTER XII.

A GREWSOME DISCOVERY.

"Why do you ask that question, sir?" asked the girl with a tremble in her voice.

"It is well to be armed with all the facts," answered Sleuth evasively.

"You are witholding something from me?"

"What makes you think so?"

"Your tone, following your curious question."

"Perhaps I am not certain, perhaps that is the reason why you think I am not telling you all that is in my mind. Have you seen the papers to-day?"

"Yes, why?"

"Did you find anything there to interest you?"

"Why, I do not know what you mean, sir."

"Anything that attracted your attention?"

"Nothing of special interest."

"Hm-m-m," mused the detective. Sleuth for once in his life was at a loss how to proceed. "Perhaps I had best change my mind and go with you to your home. We can talk there to better advantage. You will not be embarrassed by my accompanying you, will you?"

"No, sir, we can go to the parlor."

"Very good. I will go with you for a few minutes' conversation."

Without another word, Margaret led the way to her boarding place. Reaching there she let herself in with a key, bidding Old Sleuth wait in the hallway while she stepped into the parlor to turn on the electric light.

"Now I think you will be able to find your way."

The detective entered, and after motioning him to a seat, Miss Bristol removed her veil and hat which she laid on the piano with her wrap. She then seated herself, facing the detective.

"Please tell me what you meant?" she demanded coming straight to the point.

"I cannot promise to do that until my investigations have gone further, my dear young woman. It is a serious thing to either dash one's hopes or to falsely raise them. I do not wish to do either in this case, which I will confess to you, strikes me as being of more far reaching consequence than you have any idea of at this minute."

"You have not answered my question, sir."

The detective was thoughtful for a few moments. He was weighing all the possibilities and probabilities in his mind. He did not wish to make a mistake.

"You know something—you fear something?" she said in a low tense voice.

"Candidly, I do."

"Of what nature?"

"A serious nature."

"Will you name it?"

"I fear, with you, that something serious has happened to your sister."

"You mean—you mean that she is dead?"

"I fear so," answered Old Sleuth, sadly.

Margaret made no reply. She did not change her expression, but the hot tears sprang from beneath her lovely eyelids unrestrained. The detective did not speak. It was not a moment for words.

"Tell me all," said Margaret finally. "Tell me without hiding a single fact."

"You are strong enough to bear it?"

"I am."

"I was at the morgue to-day——"

"The morgue?" Margaret struggled to control herself.

"You—you saw her?"

Sleuth shook his head slowly.

"No, I did not see her."

"What did you see?"

"Something that made me very sad, something that it seems almost cruel to tell you of."

"Do not spare me. I tell you this uncertainty is more hard to bear than the truth, terrible though it be."

"I saw a hand."

"A hand!" exclaimed the young woman in amazement.

"Yes, a human hand."

"I do not understand."

"I told you I was at the morgue?"

"Yes, yes, you mean that it was a dead hand?"

The detective nodded slightly.

"Oh, tell me all."

"It was the hand and wrist of a woman, my dear child, a beautiful hand, such a hand as I have never seen the equal of for perfect outlines. Perhaps it was like yours and perhaps not. I am not prepared to say. Was your sister a blonde or a brunette?"

"A blonde—what you would call a pronounced blonde. We were not at all alike. I am dark and she is—was fair."

"Yes, I understand." The detective's mind reverted to the blonde hairs that he had found beneath the nails of the dead hand. "Would you recognize the hand of your sister were you to see it?"

"I think so—and yet—yet——"

"You might not be able to?"

Margaret nodded.

"I understand the difficulty. And this birthmark that I mentioned, can you show me on your own hand about where it is located on the hand of your sister?"

"Yes."

The young woman placed her finger on the back of her left hand.

"That, as I remember it, is the identical spot where Vera's mole is located—was located. Does that correspond with what you saw?"

Sleuth marveled at her remarkable composure, but he saw that she retained it only by a powerful effort of will.

"Yes, my dear child, it does."

"The birthmark and all?"

"Yes."

Margaret swayed ever so little in her chair.

"This is terrible," she murmured. "It is awful. I cannot comprehend it yet."

"I have done wrong in telling you as much. Do not take it too seriously. Your sister may still live. If she is I shall find her. I shall find her whether she be living or dead, and the word of Old Sleuth is a bond from which there is no escape of payment. Have courage, my child. All shall yet be well. I have much to do in your behalf and I shall now take my leave."

"May—may I see it?"

"No!" His tone was almost stern. "You may not."

Margaret with a little moan, swayed in her chair and toppled to the floor.

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD SLEUTH GETS BUSY.

"Hello! there is a fellow who seems greatly interested in me. I'll see what his game is."

Outlined in a doorway opposite to the temporary home of Margaret Bristol, the detective made out a shadowy figure. To the ordinary observer the man would have appeared to be part of a shadow itself. However, to the keen experienced eyes of the detective the shadowy figure was sharply outlined.

After having brought Margaret back to consciousness, our hero had a long and earnest talk with her in which he gave the young woman careful directions as to her future actions, at the same time telling her much that was in his mind regarding his suspicions.

At last Old Sleuth took his leave, and, as stated at the opening of this chapter, he made a discovery the instant he reached the sidewalk, yet he gave no sign that he had done so.

Old Sleuth strolled along carelessly until he reached the avenue from where he soon turned into a darkened side street. New buildings were being erected here and at one point about half way down the street a deep excavation had been made.

As the detective neared the point he observed that the shadow was still on his trail. The man had followed him at a considerable distance behind until he turned into the darkened street when the shadow suddenly lessened the distance between them.

"Ah! I see my little game worked," ejaculated the detective.

As he reached the excavation, walking close to the inside of the walk the detective seemed suddenly to lose his foot-hold and with a half muttered cry slid over the edge and went rolling down the thirty foot embankment.

The shadow halted in amazement, then started on a run for the place where Old Sleuth had gone over.

"He's sure down there," muttered the man peering into the darkness.

Drawing a club from his pocket the man cautiously climbed down the embankment. When half way to the bottom he halted, shaded his eyes and gazed keenly into the depths. "He's there! I see him. Now's my time."

With a cry half of triumph, half of rage the fellow half ran, half fell the remaining distance.

Just before reaching the figure which lay still motionless at the bottom of the pit, the shadow paused again, having suddenly realized that caution would be advisable. Crouching low he crept slowly toward the figure.

"I wonder if he's playing possum?" said the man.

"No, he fell all right and if he isn't knocked clear out, my name ain't Tom Jenkins."

Above him could be heard in the distance the faint roar of the great city, but these sounds made no impression on the ruffian. His mind was centered on the task before him. The gleam of a wild animal was in his eyes and murder was in his heart. Once more Tom Jenkins crept forward.

His club was raised above his head.

For one breathless second he held it aloft, but suddenly he sprang back watching and listening. He turned and looked behind, gazed in every direction, then muttered under his breath:

"I thought I heard something."

"No, I guess I'm imagining things. I didn't hear nothing. Maybe the cove's light is put out already, but I ain't takin' no chances, nor I ain't takin' no chances on bein' caught nappin.' No, I guess there ain't nobody around here but me, and the cove."

Once more Jenkins took a step forward, glanced about him furtively, then moved ahead with more confidence than before.

He stood over the body faintly outlined in the darkness. Again the club was lifted above his head. It paused there a brief second then descended with the full force of his muscular arm.

The sound of a muffled blow was heard as the club descended with a swift stroke. Again the club was raised; again it descended with more force than before.

Whack, whack, whack!

The man Jenkins straightened up with a little cry of triumph.

"I've won it! I've won it!" he exclaimed. "I'll—" the word died on his lips. A sudden and tragic interruption occurred at that moment. Tom Jenkins uttered a sudden cry of alarm.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TABLES ARE TURNED.

Bang!

There had come a sudden rush, a leap from a dark figure in the background, that had seemed to rise from the very rocks themselves.

Tom Jenkins for the instant believed he had been attacked by some strange, wild beast. But the powerful blow that landed behind his ear indicated that his head had come in contact with a human fist.

Jenkins went down in a heap. But his was a tough skull, he was on his feet instantly, only to receive a blow more powerful than had been the first. This time the ruffian did not rise. He lay stretched out unconscious at the bottom of the pit.

"Good job!" exclaimed the assailant.

Old Sleuth had accomplished another one of his quick turns easily outwitting his assailant. As the reader has no doubt imagined ere this, the detective's fall over the embankment was part of a quickly conceived plan. He had taken long chances in permitting himself to fall over an embankment that might have led to his death.

He had landed near the bottom with nothing more serious than a few bruises, but the instant the detective had checked his fall he quickly removed his outer clothing, arranging a dummy by laying the clothes over a stick that had been used in blasting.

This done, Sleuth crouched down behind a projecting rock and awaited what he knew would follow a few moments later. He watched the approach of the enemy with an amused gleam in his eyes. When the right moment arrived, and with one of those marvelous catlike leaps, for which the great detective was noted, landed on his enemy with unerring aim.

For a bare moment the detective stood over his victim.

"I reckon this fine gentleman got the surprise of his life that time," muttered the detective. "I guess I'll lace him up before he comes back to life."

With skillful fingers our hero tied the man's hands behind his back, then secured his ankles firmly together. This done, he sat down on a rock close beside the prostrate Jenkins and awaited for the man to recover.

He had not long to wait. A few moments later Jenkins opened his eyes. He made out a shadowy figure crouching close beside him. For a few moments Jenkins could not speak. Then, his voice returning to him, he demanded, tremblingly, "Who—who are you?"

"Perhaps I am Old Nick," answered the detective humorously. "Who are you?"

"I ain't sayin'."

Sleuth lighted a match, and shading it with his hand held it over the face of his victim. "Hello! Tom," cried the detective. "I haven't seen you for a long time. When did you get out?"

A muttered curse was the answer to the question.

"Well, well, this is a most unexpected meeting. I thought there was something familiar about your step when I heard you following behind me."

"You didn't hear me. You only thought you did. I wasn't makin' no noise at all," snapped the prisoner.

Old Sleuth chuckled softly.

"Oh! so you admit it, do you?"

The man fell silent. He realized that he had made a damaging admission.

"Tom, why did you try to do me up?"

"None of your business," answered Jenkins.

"I'll make it my business."

"Somebody put you on my track."

"Well, what if they did?"

"Somebody wanted you to put me out of business?"

"Did they?" answered the crook with a leer. "Who are you, anyway?"

"You ought to know me, Tom."

"Well, I ought to, but I don't. Are you an officer?"

"I'm not here to answer questions, I'm here to ask them," replied the detective. "I want to know why you sought to kill me?"

Jenkins made no reply.

"Somebody put you up to this job."

"You won't get nothin' out of me. You might as well let up on tryin' to pump me."

"I'll tell you what I'll do Tom. I'll take you around to the station. I reckon the Captain will be glad to see you for that little job you did around on Sixteenth street, after you came back from up the river."

"No, no, no," protested the ruffian.

"Then tell me the truth," demanded the detective, sternly.

"Will you let me go if I do, Boss?"

"I will see that you get off a great deal easier if you make a clean breast of this affair."

"I was tryin' to earn an honest dollar," answered Tom.

"It strikes me that you have peculiar ideas of honesty," replied the detective with another laugh. "Who is the man who sent you here?"

Jenkins hesitated for a brief second before replying.

"You will be easy on me if I tell you all I know?"

"It will be better for you if you do."

"Then I'll peach on the whole business," exclaimed the crook with savage determination.

CHAPTER XV.

ON A NEW LAY.

"Now, who was the man?"

"I don't know him."

"You don't know him?"

"No, never saw him before."

"When did you first meet him?"

"About two hours ago."

"What?"

"I was passing through a certain street that I know about, when the fellow called to me. He asked me where I was goin' and a few other things, and then he wanted to know if I would like to earn a wad. I said I was lookin' for some easy money. He said: 'I'm your man.'"

"Well?" urged the detective.

"The bloke told me that there was a man in No. 49 who ought to be rapped over the head and put to sleep so he wouldn't wake up again for a year of Sundays."

"And you agreed to do the rapping?"

"No, not at first. But I am trying to tell you about it."

"Proceed," said the detective.

"At first I wasn't very hot for the job but the bloke talked so sweetly and made me think it was such easy money that he kinder convinced me that he was doin' me a favor in giving me the job."

"How much were you to get for the job, Tom?"

"That don't matter."

"I said, how much were you to get for the job?" demanded the detective sternly.

"Oh, just a handful of change."

"You are lying! How much were you to get?"

"Fifty plunks."

"And that was all?"

"Yes."

"You were willing to kill a man for fifty dollars?"

"Well, no. I reckoned I wouldn't knock you out, just put you to sleep."

"Tom, you might as well be truthful with me. You cannot fool me. If you lie to me in the slightest particular, you'll go back up the river for ten years. How would you like that?"

"I—I wouldn't like it."

"Did he give you anything down?"

"No."

"When were you to get the money?"

"When I did the job."

"Where is the man now?"

"I don't know."

"But, how were you going to get your pay if you don't know the man and have no idea where he is?"

"I was goin' to meet him."

"Oh! you were, eh?"

"Yes."

"Where were you going to meet him?"

"Thirteenth street and Third avenue."

"What time?"

"At one o'clock in the morning."

"You were going to meet him at one o'clock in the morning at Third avenue and Thirteenth street, is that it?"

"Yes."

Old Sleuth consulted his watch by the light of a match. He found it was exactly half an hour after midnight. A quick plan suggested itself to the fertile mind of the great detective. He pondered over it for a moment, then asked, "did you see the face of this man plainly?"

"No, I did not."

"Then, how will you know him when you see him?"

"I would know his voice anywhere."

"How?"

"He talked like a foreigner and lisped a little. He made me laugh when he lisped, 'cause he reminded me of a baby that I knowed once."

"Do you think he will be there?"

"Sure thing, why not?"

"No, he won't be there Tom. You have been an

easy mark and all he wanted was for you to do the job——"

"I'll tell you why he'll be there, Boss;" interrupted Jenkins, "because he's too dead anxious to know all about it."

"All about what?"

"Don't you see, he wants to get rid of you? He wants to know whether you are out of the running and the only way he can find that out is by meeting me as he agreed to."

Old Sleuth nodded his head approvingly.

"That's good logic," he said. "And now Tom, I have got to disturb you a little further. It's kind of hard on you I know, but you must remember, you tried to cause me a little inconvenience."

"What are you going to do, Boss?"

"I am going to trade places with you."

"What do you mean?"

"You'll see in a moment. Now I'm going to untie your wrists and your ankles, but mark me well, no tricks! Make one move Tom Jenkins and you are a dead man. I'll put up with no nonsense from you. I have got your gun and your knife in my pocket now, so stand up and take your medicine like a little tin soldier."

Tom uttered something that sounded like a growl.

Old Sleuth lost no time. With deft fingers he released the bonds that held the man securely, then without further words stripped off the man's outer clothing. This done, the detective removed his own outer garments and a few minutes later had fully clothed the other man in them. Next a false beard was placed on the face of Jenkins and over all, the slouch hat of Old Sleuth was crushed down on the victim's head.

This done, our hero then clothed himself in the discarded garments of the ruffian, Jenkins. A few skillful touches changed the officer's face into a very fair counterpart of the man before him.

"Well, you're a bird," ejaculated Tom. "You certainly are. What are you goin' to do with me now?"

"I'm going to tie you up, Tom, just the same as you were before."

"I thought you was goin' to let me go," wailed the ruffian.

"Not yet my friend. Now if you see me come back here with anyone else, you are not to make a noise, you are to appear as though you are a dead man. At the least sign of treachery—I'll put a bullet through you. Do you understand?"

"I'm wise," answered the crook with a grin.

Having made his man secure and added a few finishing touches to his own appearance, Old Sleuth hastily clambered to the top of the embankment. There he halted and consulted his watch. It lacked but ten minutes to the time Tom Jenkins was to meet the stranger at Thirteenth street and Third avenue.

"I must hurry," muttered the detective. But just then there came a sudden and unexpected interruption, an interruption that bade fair to upset all his plans.

CHAPTER XVI.

SLEUTH MEETS A STRANGER.

"Well, what's going on here?"

A gruff voice at the detective's very elbow caused him to turn sharply. Sleuth found himself facing a blue-clad guardian of the peace. Suspicion was in the eyes of the policeman, and the detective could not blame the officer, for at that moment Old Sleuth's appearance was far from that of an honest man. He was a tough in every line of face and figure under his carefully assumed disguise.

"Who are you?" demanded the policeman.

"I don't know as that's any of your business," answered the detective belligerently.

"I'll show you whether it's any of my business or not. You come along with me."

"Where to, Boss?"

"To the station house."

"What for?"

"You'll find out when you get there."

"You ain't got no right to take me in. I ain't done nothin'."

"I am not so sure of that. I reckon I have seen your face before."

"Who do you think I am?"

"You're Tom Jenkins."

Old Sleuth chuckled softly. His disguise had proved more successful than he had any idea it would.

"I reckon the Captain wants to see you. Come along with me."

As he spoke, the policeman laid a strong hand on the arm of the detective. Then things began to happen with surprising rapidity. Old Sleuth's free hand came up with a short arm jolt, catching the policeman fairly under the point of his chin. The officer was lifted clear off his feet, and landed on his back in the middle of the half-darkened street. The policeman did not move. He lay where he had fallen.

"I am sorry," muttered our hero. "But, it had to be done. I haven't any time to fool around station houses to-night."

Making sure that his man would give him no further trouble for the next minute or two, Sleuth turned and sped down the street. He proceeded to Third avenue, where he took a car downtown. He did not get off at Thirteenth street where the meeting was to take place, but left the car one block further up. From there he strolled leisurely down to Thirteenth. There was no one in sight who looked as if he might be the man with whom Jenkins had the appointment, though the hour was five minutes past the hour of the appointment.

"I shouldn't be surprised if he did give me the slip," muttered the detective.

Saying this, our hero stepped into a darkened doorway, where, pressing back into the shadows he waited patiently.

Some twenty minutes elapsed when he saw a gentleman walk down the street toward his own hiding place. Old Sleuth surveyed him critically for a moment, then muttered:

"I reckon he's looking for someone."

The fellow wore a slouch hat which, pulled well down over his face, effectually concealed his features.

Sleuth let the fellow pass on the opposite side of the street, after which the detective slipped from his hiding place, hurried down to the next corner, then came up on the same side on which the other man was walking. In a few moments they were close together.

Sleuth halted when less than a dozen feet separated them.

"Say, Boss, what time is it?" he questioned, imitating the voice of Tom Jenkins as closely as possible.

"It's time honest men were in bed," answered the stranger with a slight lisp in his tone.

"That's why you're out, eh?" sneered the supposed Tom Jenkins.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" exclaimed the gentleman, drawing a little closer.

"Yes, it's me. But you're late."

"I was detained," exclaimed the man.

"What news?"

"It's all right."

"What do you mean?"

"I've did it."

"Explain. What have you done?"

"I put the bloke to sleep."

"You put him to sleep?"

"Yes, I did."

The stranger uttered an exclamation of satisfaction under his breath.

"Tell me about it," he said in a low, tense voice.

"There ain't much to tell. I just handed him one with my billy over the cocoanut and he dropped over into a hole in the ground."

"A hole in the ground?"

"Yes, where they had been digging for a building."

"Where is he now?"

"Oh, he's down there. He'll be there all right until sometime tomorrow when the workmen find him."

"You mean the man is dead?"

"He's dead all right."

"Good job," exclaimed the stranger, with difficulty suppressing the triumph in his tone.

"I'll take my wad now, Boss."

"I am sorry, my man, but I haven't enough change with me to pay you. Let's see, it was ten dollars I was to give you?"

"Nothing of the sort. It was fifty dollars."

"Then you had better come down mighty quick."

"You are in a boat, young fellow."

"It strikes me that you are the one that's in a boat," answered the gentleman, sarcastically.

"See here, this won't do," snarled the supposed Tom Jenkins stepping close to the other. "You'll come across or I'll take it out of you."

"You'll take it out of me?"

"Yes."

"You dare threaten me?"

"No. I ain't threatenin'. I'm just tellin' you what's what."

"I intend to pay you, but as I said, I haven't the money with me."

"Then get it quick."

"All right, you come with me to my house and I'll pay you as I agreed to. But first, you must show me that you have earned the money."

"How show you?"

"Take me to the man you have laid out."

"I'll do that you bet," answered the supposed Jenkins.

The men turned away with one accord and hurried down the street. Old Sleuth disguised as the ruffian Tom Jenkins, leading the way, the other following a short distance behind.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN A SERIOUS PREDICAMENT.

Old Sleuth continued rapidly along, neither man giving any heed to the other during the entire journey to the place where Old Sleuth had left his victim.

Reaching the darkened street the detective saw the policeman half way down the block.

"This won't do," he muttered. Then turning about made his way around to the other side of the excavation. The place was so dark that the officer in the street was unable to see them.

Motioning to the stranger, Old Sleuth waited for the man to come up beside him.

"Where is he?"

"He's down there, Boss."

"I don't want to go down in that hole, thank you."

"You don't have to. I ain't askin' you to go down there. You wanted me to show you, and I'm offerin' to show you."

"Yes, you will have to show me before you get the money."

"Then, come along. I don't fancy hanging around here. I've had one run-in with a copper since I started on this game to-night, and, I'm givin' it to you straight, I don't want another."

"A policeman?" exclaimed the stranger.

"Yes, a policeman."

"Did—did he see you do it?" demanded the other in alarm.

"No, but he saw me when I got up in the street."

"What did you do then?"

"Oh! I just handed him one and run away."

"It is perfectly safe for me to go down there, is it?"

"I reckon it is."

"Lead the way, I will follow."

Grasping the arm of the stranger our hero led him carefully down the steep embankment. It was rough traveling and, had it not been for the support of the detective's hand, the man would have taken some ugly falls. The excavation seemed darker than it had before and they were scarcely able to make out anything.

"Where is he?" demanded the stranger.

"There, don't you see him?"

The man cautiously made his way to the point indicated by the detective, and stooping over, he peered down into the face of the real Tom Jenkins.

The stranger recognized the slouch hat, the long beard, and the general outlines of the clothing of the man who he had seen enter the home of Margaret Bristol. But what he did not observe, was the fact that the dead man's hands were tied behind his back, his ankles tightly secured together and a gag thrust into his mouth.

"Are you satisfied?" demanded our hero.

The stranger laid a cautious hand on Old Sleuth's arm.

"You are sure he is dead?" he asked.

"Dead? Of course he is."

"I'll make sure that he is dead before I leave here."

At that the stranger suddenly drew a revolver, leveling it at the prostrate man.

With an angry exclamation the detective knocked the weapon from the man's hand.

The latter turned upon him savagely.

"What do you mean?" demanded the stranger.

"You are a fool."

"Why am I a fool?"

"Do you want to have the reserves down on us. If I had let you pull the trigger of that gun we'd both been met up in the street by the police."

"I guess you're right at that," replied the other after a moment's reflection. "You say he is dead?"

"Yes, I said he was dead."

"I'm satisfied."

"And you will pay me my money?"

"Yes, come with me."

They made their way out of the excavation along the same course that they had followed upon entering.

"Where do we go?" demanded the detective.

"You will know when we get there."

Boarding a car, the two men started downtown. When near the Astor House the stranger alighted, followed closely by the detective. The former did not hesitate, but made his way directly to Washington street, where he turned abruptly to the left heading downtown once more. Half a block further on, the fellow halted before a three story brick building, beckoning to the man who was following behind.

Old Sleuth stepped up beside him.

"Are we at the place?" he asked.

"Yes, follow me but make no noise."

There was no light in the hallway into which the man let himself with a key. Both picked their way cautiously up the rickety staircase.

The building seemed to Old Sleuth to be deserted. He did not know the nature of the place, but his suspicions were well defined.

They proceeded on until they reached the top floor, where the stranger unlocked a door.

"Enter," he said.

"After you," answered the detective, at the same time striking a match and quickly applying it to a gas jet just inside the room.

This move was evidently unexpected by the stranger for he uttered an angry exclamation.

Sleuth closed the door behind him leaning against it with a half sarcastic smile on his face.

"You are suspicious?" sneered the stranger.

"I am always suspicious. But let us get down to business. Do I get my money, or don't I?"

"Sit down by the table and I will talk with you."

Old Sleuth did as he was bidden, carelessly seating himself by the table, while the other man stood a little distance away.

"Do I get my money?" demanded the supposed Tom Jenkins.

"*No! you get this!*" cried the stranger, suddenly drawing a revolver and leveling it at the head of the old detective.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE TIGER'S LAIR.

The detective glanced carelessly at the drawn weapon, then looked up smilingly into the face of the stranger.

"Oh! No, that isn't what I bargained for. You were to give me fifty dollars for performing a certain service for you, but you are taking up so much of my time that I will be charging you more if you don't look out!"

An expression of amazement flashed into the eyes of the old detective's assailant. The remarkable coolness of his intended victim surprised him beyond words.

"You will charge me more?"

"Yes, I will charge you more."

"I guess not, my man. You dare threaten me?"

"Oh! no, I ain't threatenin' you. I'm just tellin' you something that's so. You give me my money and I'll go away. I ain't very much in love with you anyway."

"You will go away?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"That ain't none of your business."

"You won't go away until I give you leave, and that won't be right away either. You know what I am going to do with you?"

"You're goin' to pay me that fifty dollars, that's what you're goin' to do."

"You must think I am crazy."

"I do. I know you are."

"Who are you?" demanded the stranger, his eyes narrowing suspiciously as he peered into the calm face of the detective.

"They call me Tom Jenkins. But I want that fifty and I want it *now*."

"I have no money for you. But I have a suspicion that you are not what you seem. You thought you could trick me, but I will show you that no New York crook is smart enough to outwit Juan Tavera.

"So that's your name, eh matey?"

"Yes, but it won't do you any good to know it, for I am going to kill you!"

"You are going to kill me?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Now."

All at once, our hero pretended to be greatly excited and perturbed. His fingers worked nervously and his face twitched, while an expression of triumph appeared in the face of Tavera.

"Why should you kill me?"

"Because you are my enemy."

"What makes you think I'm your enemy?"

"I know you are."

"Tell me why you think so."

"There is no necessity for explanations. I will say, however, that you have done me a service in putting a certain party to sleep, if you did it on the square. I am beginning to suspect that you did not. If you did, I want to get rid of you too, and if you did not, there is more reason than before why I should kill you."

"Please don't do that. That ain't on the square at all. Why, I go and do you a good turn and you do me dirt. You'll get into trouble if you try that game on Tom Jenkins. I ain't such a slouch as you think I be, and I ain't goin' to be shot jist yet."

"What makes you think you're not?"

"'Cause you arn't got nerve enough to pull the trigger of that gun."

"You think I haven't?" jeered Tavera.

"I know you haven't."

"What makes you think so?"

"You'd a pulled it a long time ago if you had the nerve."

"Who are you?" again demanded the Spaniard.

"I answered that question. And now I'll ask you one. What'd you want to get rid of the old party for?"

"That's none of your affair."

"Who was he?"

"My reply to the other question will answer that."

"As long as you think you are going to kill me, you might tell me a few things. I confess I am kinder in-

terested in this funny game you are playin,' and, if you don't mind, I'll light my pipe and hear it out."

"Keep your hands up!" exploded the Spaniard with sudden excitement. "If you make a move, I'll shoot you dead where you sit."

"And, what will I be doin' all that time?"

"You'll be toppling off that chair deader than the man over there in the pit."

"Oh, will I, Boss?"

"You will."

Tavera had been standing with his back toward the door that led into the hall during his conversation with our hero. In the meantime, Old Sleuth had taken the measure of his man and he had settled in his own mind what his plan of action should be when the right moment arrived. He did hope, however, to trap the man, Tavera, into some damaging admissions before he attempted to turn the tables on the fellow. Old Sleuth as is well known, was a shrewd man. His powers of reasoning and deduction were above those of any other man of his profession. He read the character of the man before him like an open book. He knew that the fellow was desperate, unscrupulous, but a coward at heart, and it was on this latter quality that he proposed to play his final card.

"You ain't answered my question yet."

"What question?" demanded the Spaniard.

"Why you wanted to get rid of the old cove?"

"That's none of your business."

"Mabby it was on account of the gal," suggested the detective in a calm tone.

"What!"

"You heard what I said."

"What girl do you mean?"

"The one you have been hanging around lately and pretending to be in love with. Fiddlesticks, you ain't got any heart, you've only got a liver and it's a white one."

"Be careful," warned Tavera, with blazing eyes. "You will goad me until I *do* pull the trigger."

"I thought you were goin' to do that anyway," sneered the detective. "You said you was. But no, you are a white-livered coward, and I'll prove it to you."

With an angry imprecation the Spaniard took a quick step forward.

"Stand where you are!" demanded Old Sleuth sternly.

Something in the tone of the man sitting so calmly before him caused Tavera to halt abruptly.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"I mean," said the detective now dropping back into his own natural tone of voice, "I mean that you had better look behind you before you attempt anything rash. Look out!"

Instinctively the Spaniard cast a swift glance behind him. That one glance was his undoing.

With a panther-like spring Old Sleuth had sprung from his chair and was upon him. A quick twist on Tavera's wrist and the loaded gun clattered to the floor. A well directed blow sent the fellow against the wall of the room at the foot of which he collapsed in a heap.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DETECTIVE IN ACTION.

For only a brief moment did Tavera remain in a dazed condition. But that interval was sufficient for Old Sleuth to tie the man's hands behind his back.

Tavera opened his eyes.

"Who are you?" he demanded faintly.

"I reckon I am the boss of this ranch just now," answered the detective with another laugh. "The shoe is on the other foot now, Mr. Man. Get up!"

Tavera made no effort to rise.

"Get up, I said!"

There was that in the eyes and tone of the detective that caused the Spaniard to slowly pull himself to his feet.

"Sit dow in that chair!" The man did so.

"So you thought you were going to kill me, did you? I reckon it will take a better man than you to pull off that little job. That's the time you took too big a contract. You thought I was an easy mark, but it's you, instead of me."

The Spaniard uttered a low, angry growl. His features were working convulsively and he was making a great effort to control his murderous rage.

"Do you know what I am going to do, Tavera?"

"No," answered the man shortly.

"I am going to kill *you!*"

Old Sleuth picked up the revolver from the floor, examined its chambers critically, then sat down on the opposite edge of the table facing his captive.

"Have you got anything you want to say before the deed is done?"

Tavera laughed.

"You think this is some kind of a joke?" questioned Old Sleuth.

"It isn't to you, though it may be to me. And come to think of it, I guess it will be a good joke to kill you, when you thought you were going to have some fun with me."

"I was only fooling," laughed the Spaniard. But there was no mirth in his laugh.

"You were only fooling?"

"Yes."

"That makes no difference. I mean business."

Tavera began to show signs of real concern. It began to dawn upon him that the man before him was in deadly earnest, and that he did mean to revenge himself.

"I'll pay you your money. Let me go."

"No."

"I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll let me go."

"Not enough."

"How much do you want?"

"More than you can give."

"I can give a great deal."

"That's funny."

"How so?"

"Only a little while ago you couldn't raise fifty dollars."

"I was only joking. I was going to pay you."

"You were going to pay me, were you?"

"Yes."

"Well, its too late now. Badly as I need money, I wouldn't take any from a coward like you; no, not even if I was starving to death. I may be purty bad and I jist as soon kill a man as not, but I ain't in your class at all."

"You wouldn't dare to talk to me this way if I wasn't tied down," exclaimed the Spaniard with a sudden show of anger.

"I wouldn't, eh?"

"No."

For answer Old Sleuth stepped around to the man and with his knife quickly severed the bonds that held the fellow's wrists together.

Tavera fairly gasped in surprise. Then a cunning light leaped into his eyes.

"Now you are not tied and I am going to tell you something."

"Proceed," said the Spaniard.

"I have said it before, and I am going to say it again—you are a white-livered coward."

"You have got a gun in your hand or you wouldn't dare say that to me."

Sleuth broke the gun, shook the cartridges out on the floor, then tossed the weapon into a far corner of the room.

"You see, I am an accommodatin' fellow, don't you?"

With a cry of triumph, Tavera hurled himself upon his tormentor. But, he did not know his man.

Old Sleuth lifted the Spaniard from the floor, swung him over his head twice, then tossed the fellow into a corner as easily as if Tavera had been but a child.

Before the man could recover himself, the detective pounced upon him, lifted him and slammed him down into a chair beside the table once more.

The Spaniard was trembling violently. He had never come in contact with such human force before. He could scarcely believe that the slight fellow before him possessed such physical powers.

"Who are you?" he demanded again.

"It isn't necessary for you to know. It's enough to say that I have got you where I want you."

"Is it money you want?"

"No. I told you once before I wanted none of your money."

"What do you want?"

"I want you to make a clean breast of this whole business."

"I don't know what you mean."

"You had better know. Why were you persecuting that young lady?"

"What young lady?"

"You know who I mean—you know well enough."

The Spaniard hesitated, then in a low, tense voice exclaimed, "I love her."

Old Sleuth laughed softly.

"Such words from your lips do not ring true."

"What about the lady's hand at the morgue?"

Tavera started as if he had suddenly come in contact with an electric wire.

"Ah!" exclaimed the detective, "I reached you that time, did I?"

There was no reply.

"What did you want of that girl?" demanded the detective sternly.

"I—I meant her no harm. I do love her."

"We'll let that pass. Who set you on her track?"

"Nobody."

"I see I have got to kill you after all. I don't dare trust you at liberty. You will be serving the other girl the same as you served the first one, the one whose hand is up there in the morgue."

The Spaniard's face was ghastly pale. He uttered an exclamation that sounded more like a gasp than a word. A violent trembling seized upon him and he shook as with the ague.

"I have a proposition that I'll make to you, you scoundrel," ejaculated the detective.

Tavera looked up hopefully.

"If you will tell me everything you know about this case, I will agree not to kill you."

"You will let me go?"

"I did not say that. I will decide what to do with you after I have made up my mind just how deeply you are in this affair."

For several minutes the Spaniard sat with bowed head, his interlaced fingers working nervously. He appeared to be in deep thought, appeared to be revolving some problem in his own mind.

At last he turned a pale, ghastly face up to the detective.

"Spare me," he said.

"On one condition. Tell all!"

"I'll tell. It isn't much I know, but I'll tell."

CHAPTER XX.

TAVERA TELLS HIS STORY.

"Proceed!" said the detective.

For the greater part of the night the two men remained in the room on the top floor of the Washington street building. The old detective drove question after question at the now cringing Spaniard, laying trap after trap for his man to walk into in order to convince himself that what the fellow said was true.

"Do you know a man named Conrad?" demanded the detective.

Tavera seemed surprised.

"Yes," he answered faintly.

"Who is he?"

"He is a millionaire."

"Where did he get his money?"

"I don't know."

"You never had any dealings with him direct?"

"No."

"Who is the man you made your arrangements with?"

"He said his name was Carter."

"But you knew there was a man higher up than he?"

"I supposed it."

"You never heard the name of the man higher up?"

"No."

"How did you happen to hear Conrad's name mentioned?"

"I chanced to hear the man Carter and another fellow talking in a restaurant on the East side one night when I went to keep an appointment with Carter."

"What was said at that meeting?"

"You mean between the two men?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. I just heard the name mentioned."

"But how did you come to know that this man Conrad is such a prominent man in his way?"

"I had heard that before."

"Now tell me in as few words as possible just what you were to do with the young lady, Margaret Bristol, in case you succeeded in making love to her."

"I was to turn her over to the man, Carter."

"For what purpose?"

"I was not told."

"You had no suspicion?"

"No."

"But, you knew about the hand that was found at the morgue?"

"Yes. I read about it in the papers."

"Did you connect that hand with the missing sister of Miss Bristol?"

"I did think of it, but then I didn't believe that could be possible."

"How much were you to get for your part in this affair?"

"Not much."

"How much?"

"I was to get a thousand dollars if I succeeded in getting the girl to go to a certain house."

"Where was that house?"

The Spaniard gave the address of a house in Harlem on One Hundred and Thirty Fourth street. The detective made a note of the address, then continued his questioning. This time he went into the personal history of the man before him, but did not succeed in learning much about Tavera, excepting that he had fled from his own country some six years before and gone to London, from which place he was also driven out later. He claimed he had been forced to take the job that had been offered him in the present case because of actual want.

"Do you really think that you would have turned this girl over to these villains in case you had succeeded?" asked the detective.

"No! I don't think I should have. I really loved the girl."

That was the point the detective wanted to bring out.

He had learned much, but he was satisfied that there were still facts that the man Tavera had not revealed. Sleuth was convinced that the fellow really knew more of the man Conrad than he had told him. The Spaniard also exhibited a surprising ignorance as to the man Carter. He did not seem to know who Carter was, where he lived, or what his business or occupation was. It struck Sleuth as very peculiar that such a man as Tavera would enter into a scheme of that sort without having better assurance that he would be paid for his labors.

All this, however, the detective, for reasons of his own, let pass. To all appearances he seemed well satisfied with the information he had obtained. For several moments the detective appeared lost in thought, the Spaniard meantime watching him narrowly.

At last Old Sleuth glanced down into the face of the man sitting by the table.

"I am convinced, Tavera, that you have been telling me the truth. Perhaps I have made a mistake——"

"Will you answer me one question?" interrupted the Spaniard.

"Perhaps! What is it?"

"Is the man over there in that hole dead, or was it only a trick?"

"You saw him, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And you thought him dead?"

"Yes."

"Well! I'll say this much, you'll never see him again on this side of the river Jordan. But that's got nothing to do with this case. He's out of it, and so are you so far as I'm concerned."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to bid you goodnight," announced the detective, a smile lighting up his face. "You and I have had a long interview, you have given me some facts I want to know, and now I'm going to show my good nature by letting you go."

"You won't have me arrested?"

"No! Not unless you get in my way again. If you do, look out. I'll not answer for what I might do then."

With that, the detective turned and left the room, He proceeded down the stairs into the hall and out into the street. After a moment he halted in the doorway, glancing this way and that, then he stepped boldly out and walked at a rapid pace up town disappearing around the first corner to the right.

A pair of dark, malignant eyes had been peering from a window of the upper floor of the Washington street block as the detective walked away.

Half an hour later, Juan Tavera slunk down the stairs of the building, stepped outside upon the street and hurried along in the direction taken by Old Sleuth.

He had not proceeded far before a second figure stepped out from the opposite side of the street and followed along in the same direction. A shadow had fallen to his trail.

The Spaniard had disguised himself before leaving his room, but the man following him could not be deceived as to Tavera's identity.

Hurrying up the elevated station at Barclay street, Tavera boarded an uptown train. The shadow, though nowhere to be seen, had taken his place at the front end of the car to the rear of the one occupied by the Spaniard. The former was able, from his position, to watch every move of the man in the car ahead. After the train had started, the fellow settled down in his seat appearing to desire to avoid observation so far as possible. He remained in that position all the way uptown until the guard at last called out One Hundred and Thirty Fourth street.

"He's going to get out here," muttered Old Sleuth, for it was he who was shadowing the trail of the unsuspecting Spaniard.

After leaving the train, the detective followed along across town at a good distance behind his man. They crossed the river on the Third avenue bridge, Tavera walking rapidly, Old Sleuth suiting his own pace to that of the man ahead of him. The detective wondered at the man's not taking a car across town, at least.

On the other side of the river the Spaniard turned sharply to the right, passed through a dark street, lined on one side by the New Haven freight yards, then dove into the thickly settled portion of that part of the city. The detective discovered that the man was nearing his destination because the fellow was consulting the numbers on the houses as he passed.

All at once, the man halted in front of a low, neat looking, wooden building which was plainly a cottage residence. He gave a peculiar knock on the door, which, after a moment's interval opened and Tavera disappeared within.

"I think I have run the gentleman to his lair," announced the famous detective in a matter-of-fact tone, as he boldly sat down on the front door steps.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PLOTTERS ARE OVERHEARD.

Sleuth had remained on the front steps for but a few moments when his quick ear caught the sound of two men ascending the stairs.

"I thought so," muttered the old detective, a peculiar smile lighting up his face.

He waited patiently for several moments more, after which he straightened up and glanced up at the second floor of the house. A light had appeared somewhere above and the detective quickly reasoned that it had been lighted in the rear of the house, the rays reaching faintly out through the front windows.

Old Sleuth strolled around to the rear of the house, where he found that his surmises were correct. Through a thin curtain filtered the bright light from a gas jet.

"I thought so," muttered the detective. But even as he spoke a green shade was pulled sharply over the window, shutting off the light entirely.

A rear porch extended out from beneath this window and it was but the work of a moment for our hero to scale one of the posts and pull himself to the porch roof.

"I always thought I was cut out for a porch climber," chuckled the detective as he swung himself up, lying prone upon the roof, which was of tin. He feared to move about and first tested the tin to find out whether it would creak under his weight. Some moments were thus consumed, until finally Sleuth had worked his way safely up to the closed window without making the slightest noise.

"It's too bad the window is closed," he muttered. "I am lucky if I hear anything out here."

In this he was right. A confused murmur of voices was all that reached him.

"I think I shall have to go around in front and make an entrance to the house for I'll never hear anything here," he muttered.

Just then something occurred that changed his plans entirely. A pair of hands reached in under the curtain and lowered the window some six inches. The aroma of a good cigar floated out through the opening thus made, smiting the nostrils of the detective.

"I wish he would pass one out," thought our hero with a grim smile on his face.

Then his attention was attracted sharply to a voice within the room.

"You say something has happened, Tavera?"

"Yes."

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Very serious, sir."

"With relation to what?"

"With relation to the affairs in which you are interested."

"You haven't yet got the girl?"

"No."

"You mean that she has escaped?" demanded the man with a trace of excitement in his tone.

"No, she has not escaped, but she is under the protection of a powerful friend."

"She is under the protection of a powerful friend?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"I do not know—that is, I am not sure. Acting upon the suggestion made to me I sought to get this one out of our way."

"And did you?"

"I thought I did, but I am not so sure now that I succeeded. Even if I did, another peril has sprung up in his place."

"You are talking in riddles. What do you mean?"

"I will explain."

"Proceed."

"In the first place, it was my idea that the girl be removed by force and taken away in a closed carriage. This was objected to and I now see that other heads were wiser than mine."

"Yes?" answered the other man.

"I see your plan."

"Oh, you do, eh?"

"Yes, sir. I see that it the plan to remove all obstacles before making a final move in the game."

"That is my plan. Has the girl been down to her office yet?"

"No, sir. She even changed her boarding place."

"Do you know where she is now?"

"Yes, sir. I followed a certain man there and just managed to locate her. At least, I believe her to be there."

"You are having the house watched, are you?"

"Oh yes; it is never without some one to look after it. I am taking care of that. But I have had another trying experience to-night that convinces me that you do not realize your danger. A man was on our track."

"Do you know who he is?"

"I have a suspicion, from a word that was dropped by a fellow I hired to put him to sleep."

"You have a suspicion?"

"Yes, sir. A well defined suspicion."

"What is your suspicion?"

"You could never guess it, sir."

"I am not a good guesser. Come to the point."

"The man I suspect of having been the friend of the young woman is a detective."

"A detective," ejaculated the second man in the room.

"Yes, sir."

"I do not believe it. It is impossible."

"It is true, sir."

"Is this detective the man you sought to put to sleep?"

"He is, sir."

"And, did you?"

"I thought so at the time, but I am beginning to have my doubts. Certain things have become clearer to me since I sat down here and have had time to think matters over. Another startling experience has befallen me this evening."

"Relate it."

Tavera then went on to repeat in detail all that had occurred during the evening, not omitting his own failure to hold the man whom he had captured in the Washington street room.

"You saw this detective you say, lying in the excavation?"

"I surely did."

"You believed him to be dead?"

"I did, sir."

"What makes you think that he is not?"

"I have reasons."

"What are they?"

"I suspect a trick."

"By whom?"

"By the man whom I thought I put to sleep."

"Explain."

"I do not believe he is dead at all. As I just told you, I think a very shrewd trick was turned on me. I was an easy mark, and I am not ashamed to confess it to you or to anyone else."

"Who do you think this fellow Jenkins is whom you say you inveigled to your room and made a prisoner?"

"I suspect he is the same fellow who fell into the excavation, and whom I thought was put out of the way."

"Oh!" exclaimed the other occupant of the room. "I begin to understand. You suspect that your so-called detective exchanged places with the man you sent to kill him?"

"That is my suspicion, sir."

For several minutes the man reflected over the information that Tavera had given him, and during that period neither man in the room spoke.

"You say, you suspect who this detective is?"

"I do."

"Who is he?"

"*He is known as Old Sleuth, the most famous detective in the world.*"

"My God!" ejaculated the man with a long drawn gasp.

CHAPTER XXII.

A FEARSOME AWAKENING.

A long silence followed the startling announcement from Tavera. An oath fell from the lips of the stranger.

"If this is true, we are undone!" he cried.

"He surely is a wonderful man if he is the fellow who got the best of me in my room," answered the Spaniard. "I count myself a pretty strong man, but he handled me as if I were a child. Still sir, it is not always brute strength that wins. Brains sometimes are more powerful than muscles."

"You have something in mind?"

"I have, sir."

"Let me hear your suggestion."

"When it comes to a matter of wits, I count myself the inferior of no one. If this fellow in reality is the man I think him, I think I can agree to put him out of the running, sir."

"How will you do it?"

"I have a plan, sir. It is better that I do not tell you what that plan is. What will it be worth to you if I succeed?"

"You are trying to extort money from me," exclaimed the other man in an angry tone.

"Very well, if you think so, I will withdraw from the case. You can, perhaps handle it better than I."

Old Sleuth heard the Spaniard rise, nosily shoving back his chair, followed by a sound of footsteps as if the man were starting for the door.

"Hold! Perhaps I was too hasty. The information you have brought me naturally has upset me greatly. You are not deceiving me?"

"I am telling you the truth."

"Sit down."

The listener without heard Tavera once more resume his chair.

"Will you make terms with me?" demanded the Spaniard.

"Name your price."

"What will you give?"

"I'll give you a thousand dollars more than I bargained to."

"That won't do."

"What do you mean?"

"It is not enough," answered the Spaniard with emphasis.

"How much do you want?"

"Ten thousand more than the agreed upon price."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the stranger in a voice of suppressed rage. "It is robbery!"

"Robbery?"

"Yes!"

"Speaking of robbery, there are others interested in a game of this sort, others whom both you and I know well. The word does not come gracefully from you, sir."

"I'll not give it."

"Very well, sir, then there is nothing more to be said."

"Do not be hasty, Tavera. It is to your interest to see this thing through. I have been thinking that perhaps I could not do better than to pay you your price."

"I thought you would, sir."

"When will you begin?"

"This very night. But first, sir, there is another condition."

"Another condition?"

"Yes, sir."

"Name it."

"You must pay me half of the ten thousand dollars down to-night."

"I do not carry five thousand dollars about with me in my pocket, nor do I keep it in my house. You should know that without my telling you."

"You can draw me a check."

For a moment the other was silent. Evidently he was considering the proposition made by the insistent Spaniard.

A moment's silence followed, during which the listener lay quietly on the tin roof awaiting the man's decision.

"Very well, I'll agree to your terms."

"That is as it should be," answered Tavera in a triumphant tone.

"You say you begin to-night?"

"Yes."

"How will you proceed?"

"In my own way."

"Relate to me again, the circumstances that led up to your capture in your own apartments."

The Spaniard quickly went over the incidents before narrated.

"I am inclined to agree with you. The fellow was too sharp for you and unless you look alive, he'll beat you at your own game and we'll all be ruined."

"I'll take all the chances, sir."

"And, while you're doing so, don't forget that you are imposing the same chances upon others."

"I will be cautious, sir."

"See that you are."

"Do you wish anything more done about the girl now?"

"No, not until this little matter in hand is settled. One false move would ruin all."

"No one suspects, sir, that is, no one unless it be this detective fellow, and he will be disposed of before he gets a chance to do anyone real injury."

"Think carefully over what the man, who turned the tables on you, said——. Did he mention any names or give you any idea that he had a suspicion as to the true facts in the case?"

"No, sir."

"Think hard."

Suddenly the Spaniard uttered a short, sharp exclamation.

"Ah! you have thought?"

"One thing has occurred to me, sir."

"Name it."

"During our conversation, I recall now, the fellow asked me if I had ever heard of a man named Conrad."

"What!"

"That's what he said, sir."

"Then all is lost. Wait! He let you go, making no effort to detain you, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"What reason had he for doing that if he knew so much?"

"I do not know, sir."

"But I know," exclaimed the man in a loud tone that was not unmixed with terror. "I know! He released you so that he might follow you here!"

"Alas, alas, all is lost."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE POLICE TAKE A HAND.

Silence reigned in the room following the announcement of the stranger. Neither man spoke for several minutes. The straining ear of the listener without caught the sound of labored breathing on the other side of the curtain. Off in the distance, could be heard the roar of the fast express trains thundering over the viaduct, punctuated here and there by the shrill scream of a steam whistle on the river.

"Why don't you do something?" cried the stranger in a loud tone.

"I was waiting for you to suggest," replied the Spaniard.

"Suggest what?"

"Suggest what you would like to have me do?"

"I am paying you to suggest——I am paying you ten thousand dollars, five thousand of which you already have, to remove this terrible man from my path."

"I understand that."

"Then, why don't you do it?"

"I will in due time. There is no need for haste."

"No need for haste?" fairly screamed the stranger. "Why man, every minute's delay plunges us deeper and deeper into peril."

"It is getting near morning," said Tavera in low muttered tones. "I fear that little can be done before the night comes on. By that time I shall have all my plans laid, and ere another night is ended, this man, this detective will be in no position to do you further harm. I am saying this, granting that he is not already dead. Of that I am not sure either, one way or the other. Do you remain here?" asked Tavera.

"Of course, why not?"

"Nothing, only I just asked the question."

"See to it that the girl is carefully watched. Keep her under surveillance every minute of the time."

"It is being done."

"That is well."

"Yes——"

"And Tavera?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is something else I wish you to attend to for me."

"When?"

"At once."

"I shall be glad to. What is it?"

"I wish you to see someone for me."

"Very good, who is it?"

The name was mentioned in a tone so low that the listener without was unable to catch it, though he strained his ears to do so.

"I understand," answered the Spaniard.

"You know where he lives?"

"Yes. You remember that I called there once before."

The last remark was accompanied by a short, harsh laugh.

"Yes, I recall it."

"What do you wish me to do there?"

"Tell him everything."

"Everything that has occurred?"

"Yes."

"You mean with regard to the girl?"

"I mean, in regard to this terrible man who you say is on the track of the mystery."

"What else shall I tell him?"

"Warn him to prepare against surprises, to leave nothing that would serve as a clue in case anything is traced to his door."

"I will do so. And, if you have nothing more to suggest, I will take my departure."

"You are sure you are not followed here."

"I am positive. I pride myself on the fact that no one could shadow me without my being aware of the fact."

"We are laboring under a great disadvantage. We are trying to down and put to sleep a man who may already be dead. It's the uncertainty of the case that makes it so hard to handle."

"Yes, I understand that. I ought to. Do you want me to return here after I have seen him?"

A moment's reflection on the part of the other man followed the putting of the question.

"Yes, I think perhaps you had best return and tell me what he thinks."

"I will do so."

Sounds of departure floated out to the man listening on the roof of the porch. The detective realized that Tavera was on the point of proceeding to the home of one of the chief actors in the present conspiracy.

"This is very fortunate indeed," chuckled the detective to himself gleefully. "I'll show the Spaniard whether he can be shadowed or not, and I reckon I'll give him a little surprise before the dawn of another day."

Old Sleuth cautiously let himself down to the edge of the roof, where he hung with his hands for a brief second, then dropped to the yard below as lightly as a cat.

At that instant he heard a door close at the front of the house. Sleuth started to hurry around the corner, when, he tripped over a vine and fell headlong. His ankle pained him sharply and he realized that he had sustained a slight strain. With a muttered exclamation of disgust, the detective regained his feet and went limping around the corner of the house, headed for the street. Reaching the front yard, he halted, peered about him inquiringly to find out which way the man whom he supposed to be the Spaniard had gone.

"Ah! he is going uptown," exclaimed the detective, his ears catching the sound of rapidly moving footsteps.

The yard was in a deep shadow from a row of large maple trees extending along the inner edge of the side walk, so that the walk itself, was shaded almost as densely as was the yard.

The detective opened the gate and stepped out. As he did so, he halted instantly.

A slight movement near him had caught his keen ears.

The detective's hand dropped to his weapon, but otherwise, he gave no sign that he had discovered anything unusual. He had remained in this position but a few seconds when a man stepped quickly from behind one of the large maple trees.

"Hello! what's going on here?" demanded the stranger, and almost at the same instant a second figure appeared from behind one of the other trees. Both men were policemen. They had been on their beat a short distance from the house when they heard the sound of the closing door that had attracted the attention of the detective. Their curiosity had been excited and the officers stepped briskly down the street, reaching the house about the time that Old Sleuth made his appearance around the corner of the building. Both officers had quickly dodged behind the trees. They had heard rather than seen him.

Sleuth muttered an exclamation of disgust under his breath. Every second was precious. He could not afford to have any disturbance raised there, knowing that it would attract the attention of the man within the house and perhaps, thus frustrate all our hero's well laid plans. On the other hand, he could ill afford to be detained.

"Who are you?" demanded one of the policemen.

"Perhaps I live here."

"Where were you going at this hour of the morning?"

"I don't know as I have to answer that question."

"You'll answer it to the Captain, all right."

"The Captain?"

"Yes, the Captain."

"I have something to say to you, officer. Please step closer that I shall not be overheard."

"Oh no, you don't, my hearty. We've got you red-handed this time. We have been looking for you for nearly a month, and I reckon we've got the man whose been doing this second-story work for the last several weeks."

"You are mistaken! I am not a thief and I demand that you step aside and let me proceed. My business is urgent."

"So is ours," answered the officer jeeringly. "You come along with us."

Almost before Old Sleuth was aware of the fact the darbies had been snapped on his wrists. He could have easily downed both his men before this occurred, but he feared to do so, as such a move would be almost sure to defeat his plans. Therefore, he made no resistance.

"Men, you are making a mistake," he said in a low tone.

"No, I reckon you're the one that's made the mistake."

Placing his lips close to the ear of one of the men, Old Sleuth whispered, "I am an officer!"

"Come off," jeered the policeman.

"I tell you, I am an officer."

"Piffle!"

"You're making a serious mistake in detaining me. The man I am after is a desperate crook. He is getting away, and if you will listen, you can hear his footsteps down the street. I demand that you release me."

A harsh laugh greeted the announcement. Grasping him firmly by the arm, the officer turned and hurried our hero down the street in the direction of the station house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TREATING THEM TO A SURPRISE.

The detective permitted himself to be led along without offering any resistance. He was well pleased with one thing. They were going in the direction that the man Tavera had taken. Sleuth could still hear the fellow's footsteps as the Spaniard hurried uptown. Fortunately, the conversation in front of the house had not appeared to have attracted any attention from within. At least, our hero hoped this might be so.

They had proceeded about half way down the block, neither of the three men speaking, when a sudden and startling incident occurred. At that moment they were passing a vacant lot. The place was poorly lighted from a street lamp half a block away.

Most unexpectedly, the detective dropped to his knees. Both arms shot out. Each arm grasped a leg of the policeman.

Crash!

Two bluecoats landed heavily on their heads on the side walk. Both men were slightly stunned.

Quickly, and with the skill of a handcuff performer, our hero slipped the irons from his wrists and sprang to his feet. Almost at the same moment the officers did likewise.

Old Sleuth's fists shot out with two lightening-like, short arm jolts and the officers went down. This time they made no effort to rise. And for the very good reason that each had been wholly knocked out.

The detective did not wait for them to recover. Instead, he started on a brisk run down the street. Search as he might, however, he found that he had lost the trail of the man, Tavera.

"This is too bad," muttered the detective. "Here I was, right on the verge of solving the mystery, when those fool policemen had to get in my way."

He reflected for a moment, then like a flash a plan suggested itself to him. Quickly changing his appearance, our hero turned and boldly retraced his steps. He had gone but a short distance before he met the two policemen running toward him. Another moment and they had grabbed him by the arm.

"Hello! what's this?" demanded Old Sleuth.

"Oh!" exclaimed one of the policeman. "You are not the man we are looking for. Did you see a fellow with a slouch hat and a heavy beard anywhere down here?"

"Yes. I saw the fellow."

"Which way was he going?"

"He bumped into me around the corner to the left, there."

"Thank you."

The policemen were off at top speed.

His face wearing a broad grin, our hero proceeded on up street until he had reached the scene of his recent adventure. He did not halt, but stepped confidently into the yard and walked nearly around the house. In that brief journey he discovered two things. A light in the upper rear window was still burning

brightly, and the heavy footfalls of a man pacing back and forth in the chamber were heard.

"It couldn't be better," muttered the detective.

Sleuth stepped around to the front door. A moment's tampering with the lock was sufficient for his purpose. The bolt fell back and the door opened easily to his touch.

Without making a sound, our hero thus made his way up the stairs.

The man he had been observing earlier in the evening was still pacing the floor with quick, nervous steps. But these steps were sharply arrested by a voice from the doorway.

"Good evening, Mr. Conrad."

The latter turned like a flash.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Don't you know me?"

"I never saw you before. What do you want here at this hour of the night?"

"Our mutual friend, Tavera, sent me here."

"For what purpose?"

"To make a revelation to you."

"I know no man named Tavera."

"That is strange, seeing that he was here less than an hour ago."

"When did you see him?"

"A little while since."

"Where?"

"He was on his way to the Doctor's."

Mr. Conrad started violently.

"Deliver your message and be gone before I throw you from my house. I suspect you are a burglar. There have been many burglaries here of late. I warn you that I am armed. I shall not hesitate to shoot at the first sign of trickery on your part."

"Sit down, Mr. Conrad. Don't get excited. Time enough for that when the occasion arrives."

"State your business."

"You know a young lady by the name of Margaret Bristol, do you not?"

Conrad's face grew a shade paler.

"I do not."

"You know of her?"

"I do not."

"How about her sister, Vera?"

"Man! what are you talking about?"

"My words are plain."

"I believe you are a mad man."

"You may believe what you choose. I have come here to obtain certain information and I shall not leave until I do."

"Oh! you did, eh?"

"Yes."

"I thought you said you were here to make a revelation to me."

"That also, is true. We will each tell our little story."

Conrad suddenly threw his hand to his hip pocket as the eyes of the detective wondered momentarily toward the curtained window.

"Stop! Make another move in that direction and you are a dead man," commanded Old Sleuth, leveling a revolver at the lawyer's head.

Conrad's hand fell slowly to his side.

"Sit down."

"Who are you?" demanded the man, his face taking on a ghastly hue.

"You will know in due time. Suffice it to say that I charge you with the murder of Vera Bristol. There are other charges that I might make, but this one will answer for the moment. What have you to say?"

"It's a lie. You come here and pick a quarrel with me that you might rob me. Be gone, before I summon the police."

A bland smile lit up the face of the old detective.

"Oh! no, my friend. You will not summon the police."

"I will not?"

"No."

"What makes you think I will not?"

"You do not dare."

"Why, do I not dare?"

"Because you are a guilty wretch. You are a murderer at heart even if not in deed!"

"It is false!"

"You are yourself a robber, a low, sneaking robber of helpless women!"

"What—what do you want?" cried Conrad trembling in every limb.

"I want a full and complete confession from you."

"I have no confession to make."

"I want a full and complete restitution of all the property you hold belonging to certain persons whom I need not mention."

"Never!" cried Conrad. "It is a lie! A base lie!"

"Very well, then come with me. We'll go to see the doctor. I think you will not deny after he has faced you with your complicity in this crime."

"Who are you?" again demanded the man in a trembling voice.

"*I am known as Old Sleuth, the detective,*" answered our hero in a calm, even tone.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

"You might as well make a clean breast of it," said our hero after a long pause. "I know all, except a few unimportant details, but I am going to hear the story from you and I shall know whether or not you are telling the truth."

"If I tell you all I know, you will let me go?" questioned the unhappy man.

"I'm not making any promises. I don't need your evidence, but as I told you, I wish you to relate all the circumstances of the case."

"You say Dr. Joresky has told you all?"

"I'm not answering questions. I am here to ask them," replied Old Sleuth in a stern voice.

"Where is the girl, Vera Bristol?"

"I don't know."

"You saw the story in the papers to the effect that a woman's hand had been taken to the morgue?"

"Yes," answered Conrad faintly.

"Do you know whose hand it is?"

"I—I don't to my own knowledge."

"But, you have a suspicion?"

"Yes," answered the man after a slight hesitation.

"Whose hand do you think it is?"

"I—I fear it is hers."

Old Sleuth's heart sank within him, for he believed that now there could be no doubt as to the identity of the dead hand at the morgue.

"You think it is Miss Bristol's hand. Is that what you mean?"

Conrad nodded slightly.

"*And you are her murderer!*"

"No, no, no, no! I swear that I am not. I never harmed a hair of her head! He promised me that he would not."

"Who promised you?"

"The man whose name you mentioned."

"You mean Dr. Joresky?"

"Yes."

"What relation has he to this case?"

"He took the girl."

"For what purpose?"

Conrad squirmed uneasily, while the perspiration trickled down his face and neck.

"He wanted to make some scientific experiments."

The eyes of the detective blazed.

"You coward!" he ejaculated sternly.

"But I told you he was to do her no harm. That was a condition named."

"What was he to do to her?"

"Oh! I—I—don't know."

"Answer me!" thundered the detective.

"He—he was to make her forget."

"Forget?"

"Yes."

"Forget what?"

"Everything."

"Wait a moment. Let me understand this clearly. Do you mean that this man was to perform some operation on Vera's brain or something of the sort so that she would suffer a total loss of memory? Is that what you mean?"

"Yes," answered Conrad weakly.

Old Sleuth fixed his eyes on the face of the trembling wretch before him, holding them there for a few moments. All at once with an angry exclamation he sprang upon his victim, the detective's fingers closing around Conrad's neck.

Tighter and tighter did those fingers grip until the face of the villain showed purple, and his eyes took on an unnatural size. Suddenly Sleuth gained control of himself again. He hurled the wretch from him, Conrad falling weak, trembling and half unconscious in a corner of the chamber.

"Get up!" The fellow appeared too weak to obey the detective's command, so Old Sleuth dragged him from the floor and slammed the lawyer into a chair.

"I ought to kill you! I ought not to let a wretch like you encumber the earth for another second. But, I am not done with you yet!"

"Don't!" wailed the wretched man.

"You are the lawyer who had possession—I should say, who has possession of certain papers belonging to these girls?"

Conrad nodded.

"Where are the papers?"

"I have them here."

"Procure them at once."

The lawyer rose, made his way unsteadily across the room to an adjoining closet, the detective watching his every move.

Prying up a loose board of the closet floor, the man drew from the opening thus made, a package of papers which he carried to the room where they had been sitting, dropping them to the table.

"What are these?" demanded our hero.

"They are the papers."

Sleuth glanced briefly over the documents placed before him. He saw they were documents and vouchers representing a face value of more than a million dollars.

"Where are the deeds to the real estate?" he demanded sternly.

"There is no real estate."

"I see, you do not intend to tell me the whole truth."

"I am telling you the truth."

"Where is the real estate?"

"I have disposed of it all—I have been disposing of it for the last six months. It is all there. I was turning over the property to convert it into cash as fast as possible."

"After which, you were going to flee?"

"Well, in another month I should have been beyond your reach."

"Who is this Dr. Joresky?"

"He is a Russian, a scientific man, an investigator——"

"And a cold blooded murderer!" answered Old Sleuth. "What did you propose to do with the other girl when you got hold of her? Was she to be murdered or to be caused to lose her mind?"

"No."

"What then?"

"You see, I had to get both women out of the way before I could feel safe. As long as they lived and were in their right minds, I was in peril. I hoped to get her out of sight in a way that would not arouse suspicion, and that is why I did not go boldly and take her from her place of abode."

"You are a cold blooded villain," ejaculated the detective. "What did you propose to do with her?"

"I intended to place her in a private sanatorium."

"In a mad house, eh!"

"No, a sanatorium."

"It is the same thing," answered Old Sleuth, meditatively.

In the meantime the detective had gathered up the papers, making a memorandum of each as he did so, then tying the whole into a compact bundle, which he stored away in an inside pocket.

"Who else is in this affair besides you and the doctor?"

"No one."

"What about the Spaniard, Tavera—How much does he know?"

"He knows too much. I had to tell him a few things and he imagined the rest, though he does not know how much the estate amounts to. He thinks it is only a few thousand."

"Where does the doctor live?"

Conrad gave the address of a house a few blocks further uptown. Old Sleuth pulled a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, which he snapped on the wrists of the trembling man.

"What—what are you going to do?"

"I am going to place you in a position where you will not do further harm for the rest of the night."

After securing the man's hands, the detective bound his ankles together, placed a gag in his mouth, then dumped the lawyer unceremoniously into the closet from which the papers had been taken. This done, he put out the light and hurried down the stairs. He had no more than reached the lower hall before there came a tap on the outside door. Sleuth swung the door open, stepped silently to one side, and the hall being dark, the man who entered the door did not observe who had opened it.

"Well, I am back," said Tavera. "The doctor says you are to come and see him at once. I am to remain here until you return."

"You are right, you will remain here until I return," answered the detective in a stern voice, at the same time letting go a lightening-like blow from his powerful fist, which laid the Spaniard unconscious on the floor.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Old Sleuth lost no time in securing his man, whom he carried into an adjoining room and laid on the floor. This done, the detective hurried uptown to the home of Dr. Joresky. He did not stop to knock, but opened the door in his own way and entered.

At first he thought the doctor, having been warned, had fled. Then all at once he caught the sound of a voice. It was a woman's voice and what the detective heard was a moan.

"Hello!" muttered Old Sleuth. "I think I am just in time."

Without making the least noise the detective groped his way through the hallway of the house, listening intently for a repetition of the moan.

It did not come. He was perplexed. But all at once a faint ray of light beneath a closed door caught his eye. What he had seen was an instantaneous blue flash. At first he thought it was lightning. Then another thought occurred to him suddenly.

The detective cautiously opened the door, beneath which, he had seen the light. The door opened on a pair of stairs leading to a cellar. It was dark below. Suddenly, however, our hero heard the moan repeated.

"It's here," he said, "I was right."

Leaping down the stairs he stooped in a listening attitude in the middle of the cellar. A bright ray of light punctuated the darkness, and the detective knew at once that it had come through a keyhole. Without the least hesitation he stepped to the source of the light, turned the knob, and gently pulled the door.

It yielded.

Before him a strange scene was being enacted. A beautiful woman lay stretched full length on a glass-topped operating table. Over her, with his back turned to the door, stooped a man applying an electric contrivance to both her temples. Somewhere a hidden motor whirred and snapped viciously. Occasionally a loose spark or flash would slip from the instrument he was using, shattering itself into a million tiny stars.

So absorbed was the man in his work that he did not observe the stern-faced stranger standing at the door. But the labors of the scientist were rudely interrupted by a voice behind him saying:

"Doctor, if you can spare a moment, I would like a word with you."

Doctor Joresky leaped clear of the floor as the words smote his ear. He found himself looking along the blue barrel of a six shooter.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am your master. Doctor Joresky you have reached the end of your rope. Is that woman dead or alive?"

"She is alive."

"Can you restore her to consciousness?"

"I can."

"Do so, instantly. And mark me, one false move and you die beside your innocent victim."

The doctor trembled violently.

"Have you destroyed her memory?"

"No."

"It is well for you that you have not. Proceed and obey my command."

For one trembling moment the scientist gazed into the face of the man before him. Then with feverish hands he set to work to bring the woman back to consciousness.

Some twenty minutes elapsed before the woman began to show signs of life. A shudder ran over her frame from head to feet. Then slowly she opened her eyes. A look of terror flashed into her face as she observed the pale, drawn face of the Russian bending over her. All at once, her glance wandered to the man standing in the doorway. The girl gave a start then reached out one weak, trembling hand appealingly.

"Is your name Vera Bristol?" questioned the detective in reassuring tones.

The girl nodded weakly.

"Thank God!" ejaculated the detective under his breath.

He noted the mole on the hand was identical with that on the hand at the morgue and he uttered a little prayer of thankfulness that this was not the hand he had first seen in the chamber of death.

After a half hour more of work on the part of the scientist, Vera Bristol was able to sit up and talk.

From her, the detective learned the full story of her abduction and the torture to which she had been daily subjected by the cold blooded scientist.

Her first words were of inquiry for her sister Margaret. Old Sleuth assured her that Margaret was well and in good hands.

In the meantime he had taken the Russian into custody, manacled him, and put him in a safe place until such time as he was ready to remove the man to a cell.

From Vera our hero learned that there was another occupant of the house—a housekeeper. Sleuth quickly found the woman and it was she who cleared up the last shades of mystery in this remarkable case.

She knew of the young lady in the house and one day in the doctor's laboratory had discovered to her horror the dead hand. Believing it to be the hand of the beautiful Vera Bristol, she determined to spirit it from the house, but in removing it she had carried away the wax model, which this strange man had constructed for his own amusement. Upon returning to her home she had discovered her error, then returned to the morgue with the real hand. The woman's purpose was to cause an investigation to be started, which, she hoped might lead to the discovery of the truth. The dead hand, however, instead of having been cut from the arm of the victim, had been taken from the arm of a hospital case that had been turned over to a medical college for dissection. So far as that was concerned, Dr. Joresky was guiltless. The identity of the real hand was never learned.

There remains little more to be said. On the following day there was a happy re-union between Vera Bristol and her sister Margaret. The legal formalities were quickly complied with, and the handsome fortune turned over to them. Old Sleuth refused any reward for his services.

In due time the three conspirators were tried and convicted, and are now serving long terms of imprisonment.

Margaret and Vera now occupy a handsome home facing Central Park, where Old Sleuth, the world-famous detective is ever a welcome guest.

THE END.

QUICK HAIR GROWTH!

Box Free To You.

Result of a Few Weeks Koskott Treatment.

TRUE METHOD DISCOVERED

Let us prove to you that the Koskott Method of Hair growing is the **genuine and scientific one.** We will send you a **DOLLAR BOX** out of the Koskott Treatment **FREE. We guarantee to grow hair** on any bald head, under cash forfeiture. Our method is directed at removing the cause, the *dermodex folliculorum*—living micro-organism—("germs") & opening the closed follicles so that the hair roots which are not dead, but dormant, (like a tulip bulb, or grass seed in a bottle) are given fertility and a **chance to grow. Ours is the treatment that MAKES GOOD** or you can use it **WITHOUT COSTING YOU A CENT.** Koskott is for men's, women's & children's heads, to clear scalp of **dandruff,** stop **falling hair** & to promote **growth of new hair.** We especially want you to answer this adv. if you have wasted time & money in liquids, washes, soaps, etc., which accomplish nothing. We want to **surprise & delight you.** Send only 10 cents, silver or stamps, to cover actual mailing & advertising cost & we will send the **$1.00 Box absolutely free,** postpaid. In plain wrapper. None sent unless 10 cts. is enclosed. **Only one box sent to a person free.**

EITHER SEX **$1. BOX FREE**

KOSKOTT LABORATORY, 1269 Broadway, 733 A, **New York, N. Y.**

VENTRILOQUISM

Learned by any Man or Boy at home. Small cost. Send to-day 2 cent stamp for particulars and proof.

O. A. SMITH, Room 1464,

823 Bigelow St. Peoria, Ill.

I will send as long as they last my 25c Book

Strong Arms

For 10c in stamps or coin

Illustrated with 20 full page halftone cuts, showing exercises that will quickly **develop, beautify, and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms and hands,** without any apparatus.

PROF. ANTHONY BARKER

1676 Barker Bldg. - - - - 110 W. 42nd St., New York

Stamp Album with 538 Genuine Stamps, incl. Rhodesia, Congo (tiger), China (dragon), Tasmania (landscape), Jamaica (waterfalls), etc., **10c.** 100 dif. Jap., N. Zld. etc., **5c.** Big list, coupons, etc., **Free! We Buy Stamps. HUSSMAN STAMP CO., St. Louis, Mo.**

DRINK HABIT

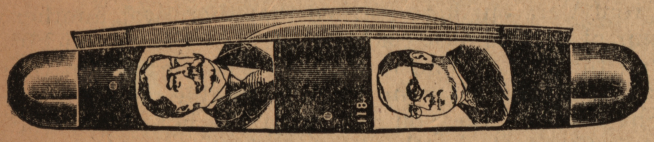
absolutely cured in 3 days, also Method for giving secretly. Guaranteed lifelong cure. **Successful after all others fail. Gentle, pleasant,** harmless; for steady or periodical (spree) drinker. **Genuine home Treatment,** medically indorsed; legions of testimonials. Valuable Book, plain wrapper, **free, postpaid. E. J. Woods, 534 Sixth Av.,** 733 A, **New York, N.Y.**

Dow's Bicycle Luggage Carrier

Best thing for the purpose ever put on the market. In use all over the United States. Can be put on or detached instantly with adjustable hook. Good sellers, because the riders all want them and the price is popular. Write for Prices. Ask your dealer.

DOW WIRE & IRON WORKS

Louisville, Ky.



AGENTS

MAKE MONEY EASY

selling Novelty Knives with name, address, photo, lodge emblem etc. on handle. Many agents earn $75 to $300 a month, and say it is the easiest way of making money.

Novelty Knives are big sellers and everyone is delighted with them. Big profits—quick sales—exclusive territory. We show you how to sell them.

Write quick for our liberal money making "Special Offer" to Agents. Our new Self Sharpening Scissors are also fast sellers.

Catalogue of Novelty Knives and agents' specialties sent Free on request.

NOVELTY CUTLERY CO.

1460 BAR ST., CANTON, OHIO

A Big Opportunity To Make Money

Hundreds of men are coining money selling Sapeco Ink Powder. Everyone wants it. Big profits—easy work—satisfied customers.

SAPECO INK POWDER

is absolutely the best on the market. It will stand the "test" of time. Some inks fade. Others corrode your pens. Many will not stand the applications of acid. There are inks of incorrect density that make your pen blot easily.

The ink you make from Sanford's Sapeco Ink Powder is **acid-proof, non-corroding, lasting.**

Mix the contents of a box of Sapeco Ink Powder with a quart of soft water, in a clean bottle, shake three minutes, and you have ready for use, one quart of blue-black ink, that is warranted to give satisfaction.

Write quick for Special Agents' Offer.

The Sanford Pen Co.

700 EAST 105th STREET

Cleveland Ohio

THE GREATEST OF ALL WEEKLIES

BY THE GREATEST OF ALL DETECTIVE WRITERS

OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY

These stories, issued every Friday, are the greatest detective stories ever written. No man has ever lived in this country or any other whose tales are so thrilling, so entrancing, which so teem with excitement and desperate situations as those of "OLD SLEUTH." The stories are twice as long as those in any other library, each story having the enormous total of 50,000 words. Nothing like it ever before attempted.

THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS ARE NOW OUT:

1. The Return of Old Sleuth, the Detective; or The Great Philadelphia Mystery.
2. The Mystery of the Missing Millions; or Tracked by a Great Detective.
3. The Secret of the Haunted House; or The Great Detective's Tragic Find.
4. The King of all Detectives; or Young Jack Sleuth on the Trail.
5. The Giant Detective's Last Shadow; A Tale of Herculean Detective Adventure.
6. The Silent Terror; A Narrative of Genuine Detective Strategy.
7. The Veiled Beauty; or The Mystery of the California Heiress.
8. The Mystery of the Spaniard's Vendetta; or A Great Detective's Marvelous Strategy.
9. The Great Bond Robbery; or Tracked by a Female Detective.
10. Old Sleuth's Greatest Case; or Caught by the King of all Detectives.
11. The Bay Ridge Mystery; or Old Sleuth's Winning Hand.
12. Shadowed to his Doom; or Foiled by the Yankee Detective.
13. Trapping the Counterfeiters; or The Lightning Detective on the Trail.
14. Trailed by the Wall Street Detective; or Badger's Midnight Quest.
15. The Irish Detective's Greatest Case; or The Strategy of O'Neil McDarragh.
16. The Greatest Mystery of the Age; or Saved by the Gipsy Detective.
17. Trapping the Moonshiners; or Strange Adventures of a Government Detective in the Tennessee Mountains.
18. The Giant Detective Among the Cowboys; or The Weird Narrative of a Lost Man.
19. The Mystery of the Black Trunk; or Manfred's Strange Quest.
20. The Chief of the Counterfeiters; or The Boy Detective's Greatest Haul.
21. The Mystery of the Floating Head; or Caught by the King of the Detectives.
22. The Beautiful Criminal; or The New York Detective's Strangest Case.
23. The Great Train Robbery; or Saved by a Woman Detective.
24. The Italian Adventuress; A Tale of Marvelous Plots.
25. Red-Light Will, The River Detective; or The Round-Up of the Wharf Rat's Gang.
26. The Twin Shadowers; or A Suprising Case of Mistaken Identity.
27. The Smugglers of New York Bay; or The River Pirates' Greatest Crime.
28. Black Raven, the Terror of the Georgia Moonshiners; or The Mountaineers' Last Stand.
29. Unmasking a Villain; or The French Detective's Greatest Case.
30. Snared by a Russian Duke; or An American Detective Among the Nihilists.
31. The Mystery of the Black Pool; or The Dutch Detective's Sensational Find.
32. The Veiled Lady of the Ruins; or Hamud's Ghastly Discovery.
33. Foiled by a Corpse; or A Tale of the Great Southwest.
34. Night Hawk, the Mounted Detective; or Trailing the Mountain Outlaws.
35. Kidnapped in New York; or The Dangers of a Great City.
36. Lured by a Siren; or In the Clutches of a Beautiful Blackmailer.
37. Old Sleuth's Triumph; or The Great Bronx Mystery.
38. A Trail of Blood; Being the sequel to "Old Sleuth's Triumph."
39. The Band of the "Red Oath;" or Run to Cover by a Government Spy.
40. Tempted by a Woman; or The French Detective's Narrow Escape.
41. The Million Dollar Conspiracy; or Old Sleuth to the Rescue.
42. Accused from the Coffin; or The Frustration of a Dastardly Plot.
43. Coolness Against Cunning; or Trailed by "Faithful Mike."
44. Foiled by Love; or The "Molly Maguires'" Last Stand.
45. Under a Million Disguises; or Manfred the Metamorphosist.
46. Tracked by the Man of Mystery; or Manfred's Great Triumph, being a sequel to Under a Million Disguises.
47. The Human Blood-Hound; or The Bowery Detective on the Trail.
48. Manfred's Strangest Case; or Foiled by the Weird Detective.
49. Monte-Cristo Ben, the Ever Ready Detective; A Narrative of Remarkable Complications.
50. Old Terrible, the Iron Arm Detective; or The Mystery of The Beautiful Heiress.
51. The Stain of Guilt; or "Old Puritan" to the Rescue.
52. A Conspiracy of Crime; or Foiling the Kidnappers.
53. "Old Ironsides" in France; or Trailed by the Giant Detective.
54. The Beautiful Mystery of Paris; being the sequel to "Old Ironsides" in France.
55. The Gypsy Detective on the Trail; or Solving a Great Crime.
56. The Half-Breed's Secret; A Narrative of Phenomenal Adventures.
57. The Italian's Revenge; A Thrilling Narrative of Adventures.
58. A Three-Fold Mystery; A Straight Out Detective Narrative.
59. The Midnight League; or The Giant Detective in Ireland.
60. The Secret of the Dungeon; being the sequel to "The Midnight League."
61. Gypsy Frank, the Long Trail Detective; or Solving a Great Mystery.
62. The Weird Detective; or "Old Baldy" on the Trail.
63. A Terrible Mystery; A Narrative of Peculiar Detective Tricks and Devices.
64. The Strangest Mystery in the World; or Harry Brand's Winning Play.
66. The Old Miser's Secret; A Strange Detective Case.
66. The Old Miser's Secret; A Strange Detective Case.
67. The Man of Mystery; or Mephisto the Detective.
68. The Mysterious Detective; or Solving a Great Case.
69. The American Monte-Cristo; A Strange and Marvelous Narrative.
70. On Their Track; being the continuation of "The American Monte-Cristo."
71. The Omnipresent Avenger; being the continuation of "On Their Track."
72. Tragedy and Strategy; being the conclusion of "The Omnipresent Avenger."
73. The Gypsy Detective's Greatest Case; or Phil Tremaine to the Rescue.
74. The Shadows of New York; or The American Monte-Cristo's Winning Hand.
75. The Old Magician's Weird Legacy; A Tale of Marvelous Happenings in India.
76. A Mysterious Disappearance; A Singularly Strange Narrative.
77. The Red Detective; A Great Tale of Mystery.
78. The Weird Warnings of Fate; or Ebeon's Strange Case.
79. The Treasure of the Rockies; A Tale of Strange Adventures.
80. Bonanza Bardie's Winning Strike; being the sequel to "The Treasure of the Rockies."
81. Long Shadow, the Detective; A Tale of Indian Strategy.
82. The Magic Disguise Detective; The Wierd Adventures of a "Transform."
83. A Young Detective's Great Shadow; A Narrative of Extraordinary Detective Devices.
84. Stealthy Brock, the Detective; or Trailed to their Doom.
85. Old Sleuth to the Rescue; A Startling Narrative of Hidden Treasure.
86. Old Sleuth, the Avenger; being the sequel to "Old Sleuth to the Rescue."
87. The Great Jewel Mystery; or The Right Man in the Case.
88. Jackson Cooper, the Wizerd Detective; A Narrative of Wonderful Detective Skill.
89. Foiling the Conspirators; or Daring Tom Carey to the Rescue.
90. The Banker's Crime; or The Weird Adventures of "Phenomenal Joe."
91. Gasparoni, the Italian Detective; A Strange Weird Tale of City Life.
92. The Vengeance of Fate; being the sequel to "Gasparoni, the Italian Detective."
93. The Secret Special Detective; or "Old Transform" on the Trail.
94. The Shadow of a Crime; or the "Iron Duke's" Strange Case.
95. The Secret of the Kidnapped Heir; A Strange Detective Narrative.
96. Foiled by a Female Detective; being the sequel to "The Kidnapped Heir."
97. "Old Ironsides" in New York; or The Daughter of the G. A. R.
98. The Irish Detective; or Fergus Connor's Greatest Case.
99. The Shadow Detective; or The Mysteries of a Night.
100. Detective Thrash, the Man-Trapper; A Story of Extraordinary Detective Devices.
101. "Old Ironsides" at His Best; A Marvelous Detective Narrative.
102. Trailed by an Assassin; A Tale of Italian Vengeance.
103. The Lust of Hate; being the sequel to "Trailed by an Assassin."
104. A Golden Curse; or The Harvest of Sin.
105. The Hotel Tragedy; or Manfred's Greatest Detective Adventure.
106. The Mystery of Room 207; being the sequel to The Hotel Tragedy.
107. Gardemore, the Detective; or the King of the "Shadowers."
108. The Fatal Chair; being the sequel to Gardemore, the Detective.
109. The Mask of Mystery; or The Graveyard Murder.
110. The Twisted Trail; being the sequel to the Mask of Mystery.
111. Booth Bell; or The Prince of Detectives Among the Indians.
112. The Beautiful Captive; being the continuation of Booth Bell.
113. Booth Bell's Twisted Trail; being the sequel to The Beautiful Captive.
114. The Wall Street Detective; or Harry Weir, the Lightning Trailer.
115. The Banker's Secret; being the sequel to The Wall Street Detective.
116. The Wizard's Trail; or The Mystery of a Lost Casket.
117. The House of Mystery; being the sequel to The Wizard's Trail.
118. Old Sleuth in New York; or Trailing a Great Criminal.
119. Manfred, the Ventriloquist Detective; or Wonderful Midnight "Shadows" in New York.
120. Wild Madge; or The Female Government Detective.
121. Old Electricity in New York; or Wayne Winthrop's Trail of a "Dead Secret."
122. Gamal the Hunchback; or The Adventures of a Ventriloquist.
123. Seth Bond, Detective; or the Mystery of an Old Mansion.
124. Galloway, the Detective; or Running the Crooks to Earth.
125. Old Sleuth's Quest; or A Fair Daughter's Fate.
126. Presto Quick; or The Weird Magician Detective.
127. Old Ironsides Long Trail; or The Giant Detective Out West.
128. Forging the Links; being the sequel to Old Ironsides Long Trail.
129. Queen Myra; or A Woman's Great Game of Hide and Seek.
130. The Duke of New York; or The Adventures of a Billionaire.
131. Prowler Tom, the Detective; or The Floating Beauty Mystery.
132. Man Against Man; being the sequel to Prowler Tom.
133. Old Sleuth's Silent Witness; or The Dead Hand at the Morgue.
134. The League of Four; or The Trail of the Man Tracker.
135. The House of Fear; or The Young Duke's Strange Quest.

TO BE PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY.

Feb. 3—136. Foiled by Fate; being the sequel to The House of Fear.
Feb. 10—137. A Dash for Millions; or Old Ironsides Trail of Mystery.
Feb. 17—138. The Trail of Three; or The Motor Pirates' Last Stand.
Feb. 24—139. A Dead Man's Hand; or Caught by his Own Victim.

For sale by all newsdealers and booksellers or sent, postage paid by the publishers upon receipt of 6 cents per copy, 10 copies for 50 cents. Postage stamps taken the same as money. All back numbers always in stock.

THE ARTHUR WESTBROOK COMPANY, CLEVELAND, OHIO, U. S. A.

PRICE
CUTH
KLY
No.1
Price 5 cents
T WITNESS
by
LD
UTH"
jcristina.com
PRT™